

From the Pastor's Pen...

I don't know what you've heard...but, it's true. I can't wait. Like a child waiting for Christmas, I can't wait. Because I'm waiting for Christmas.

Of course, I can't wait for all those things you see in the movies and on tv... for the presents around the tree, and Christmas carols, and decorating cookies, and Santa Claus, and family coming to town. I can't wait for those smells and feels I remember, of Christmas trees, and cinnamon, and cold hands holding hot cocoa. I just can't wait.

Christmas, of course, isn't just about those holiday traditions, at least not for Christians. Advent is a time set aside for us to "let ev'ry heart, prepare him room." As we celebrate the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, we are also meant to be meditating, discerning, deciding how we will prepare ourselves for Christ's coming again. Whether we do this by paring down, throwing out, or bringing in, the purpose of this time is to look for that great day "when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess." This is something I can't wait for, I long for, and yet, something I have to wait for. Like any birth, it's not something I can (or should)

rush along. I must wait...

...but not for everything. "Christmas reminds us that God couldn't wait for the end of war, suffering, or human injustice. God couldn't wait, so god broke through the shadows to bring light and love. God couldn't wait to be love in flesh – and neither should we." (Lisle Gwynn Garrity, sanctifiedart.org)

Waiting for that "great day" sometimes translates into me passively waiting for all the wrongs

to be righted, usually by someone else. I can put things off, waiting for God to feed the hungry, bring peace, heal the broken, bring justice.

This year, our hope is that we will be able to identify those things that really can't wait. No longer sitting idle, waiting, it gives us a different posture while we wait. The question then becomes, what can't wait? Where do we need to bring the hope, peace, love, and joy of God in Jesus Christ?

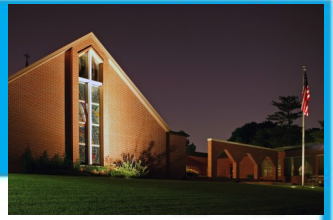


Peace Without Your Walls | Lauren Wright Pittman

German theologian Jurgen Moltmann writes, "Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is..." Dear friends, what can't wait?

May the God of hope, peace, love, and joy be with you all each and every day.

~Melodie



Be included in the new
Eastridge Presbyterian
Church directory

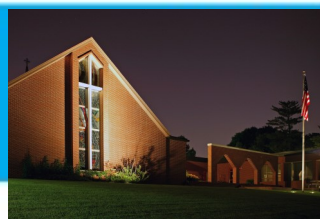
Pets are welcome!

Photography dates
January 14-16

Lifetouch.

MAKER VILLAGE FLOOD: “Here are some flood pictures from **Maker Village**. The World Vision distributed food to the people. The person who took these pictures told me the water reached the Church area, but didn't get inside the Church the time he took these pictures. I asked him to send Church pictures and the condition of the Church when he goes back.” ~ Peter Dak





Life is full of surprises. You can risk everything for big gains - or you can lose it all in a moment. But how does one win in real life? What does that even mean? Is there such thing? This answer might not be quite so clear.

This year, our GiFT theme invites us in a playful, yet intentional way to engage with all kinds of milestones and reflect on our life stories. We want to name some of our personal and communal turning points, explore, celebrate and bless them. And together, may we discover in each one of them a particular gift that God presents to our community of faith.

Come join us on December 4 for a special Advent GiFT

“Let Earth Receive Her King”

Marriage: Kingdom and Kin-Ship

We don't usually think of a wedding when we approach Christmas and the first coming of Christ in a stable in Bethlehem. But during Advent, our longing and excitement is also directed to Christ's glorious second coming. Traditionally, the church has used imagery of a cosmic wedding to express the longing of the bride (= the church, the earth) to be united with the groom in all royal glory. During our Advent GiFT this year, we are invited to enjoy a taste of a wedding feast, while we reflect on and celebrate the special bond we share with both our heavenly King and our earthly Kin.

December 4th, 5:30-7pm.

Who is GiFT for?

Literally for everyone. Meaning: for youth, singles, couples, moms and dads, college students, teenagers, kids, grandmas and grandpas, empty nesters, newcomers, working people, retired people, people with pets, and for those without. In short: for everyone (did we say that already?).

What are the goals of GiFT?

GiFT reclaims God's intent for faith to be shared in community and across generations. Through an experience of learning together, sharing faith, praying together, serving and celebrating rituals and traditions, GiFT helps connect families and individuals who want to spend more quality time together. GiFT builds relationships between the generations and across the congregation. By sharing our faith stories and learning from each other, we **Grow in Faith Together**.

What does a GiFT event look like?

GiFT takes place on the first Wednesday each month. A GiFT event begins at 5:30 pm with a joint dinner and a time of fellowship in the fellowship hall. At the heart of a GiFT evening is a fun interactive experience that centers around milestones of our lives, and engages all ages. GiFT also offers practical tools to nurture the faith of families and individuals in our daily lives.

Future Milestones:

- Jan 1 - Moving: a Fresh Start
- Feb 5 - Crisis and Healing
- Mar 4 - Retirement: Re-committing Our Faith
- Apr 1 - In Our End a New Beginning

Previously:

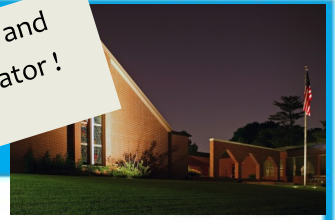
- Sep 4 - Birth: Baptism
- Oct 2 - Career: Vocation
- Nov 6 - Home: Community and Communion

Preview: January GiFT (“Moving: a Fresh Start”) will be on New Year's Day (!) We'll share a potluck meal together, as we say farewell to the old year and begin again.





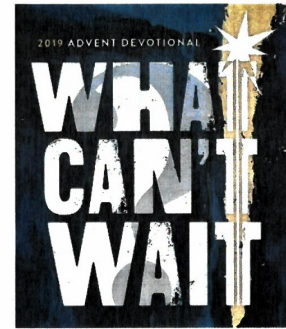
Cut this calendar out and
put on your refrigerator!



EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



Advent Calendar



December 1: **Worship** at 9:00 and 10:30 am

Starting December 3: **"Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph"** by Adam Hamilton. Study from 4:15-5:15 pm in the Huxtable Lounge (*weekly during Advent*). Led by Pastors Melodie and Thomas.

Starting December 4: **Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes** by Cynthia Campbell. Study at 10:30am in the Conference Room (*weekly during Advent*). Led by Donna Gustafson.

December 4: **GiFT: "Let Earth Receive Her King": Marriage: Kingdom and Kin-Ship** at 5:30 pm. Meal and fellowship in the Roeske Fellowship Hall.

Starting December 5: **Advent Study** from 6:30-7:30 in Huxtable Lounge (*weekly during Advent*). Led by Kylie and Cameron Meter.

December 8: **Worship** at 9:00 and 10:30 am; **New Member Class & Lunch** following 10:30 worship in Huxtable Lounge.

December 11: **Advent Workshop** (*supper at 6:00 pm, workshop following*) in the Roeske Fellowship Hall

December 13: **Trailblazers Caroling & White Elephant Gift Exchange** 7:00 pm in Huxtable Lounge

December 15: **Worship** at 9:00 and 10:30 am; **Bethlehem Peace Light** available (and on request).

December 15: Eastridge Presbyterian Women **Cookie Sale**

December 18: **Advent Worship** (*pizza supper at 6:00 pm, worship following*) in Roeske Fellowship Hall & Sanctuary

December 22: **Worship** at 9:00 am and 10:30 am

December 24: **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 5 pm (Children's Christmas Program), 7pm & 9pm**

Also during Advent: **Angel Tree** (*take a card from the tree & provide what's listed*) and **What Can't Wait** devotional (*online and copies at the Welcome Desk*). Continuing on Monday evenings during December: **What's So Amazing About Grace** by Phillip Yancy, study at 7:00 pm in Huxtable Lounge.

Join us Wednesday nights in Advent!

December 4 - A Special Advent Edition of GiFT

December 11 - Worship Workshop led by the youth

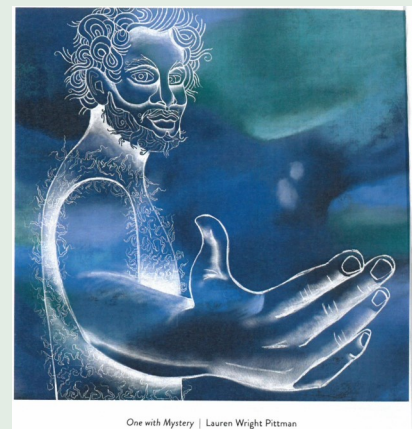
December 18 - Advent Worship in Song

Join us in the Roeske Fellowship Hall: Dinner each week is at 6 pm; Worship is at 6:30 pm.

Menu: December 4 - meal provided (you don't have to bring anything!)

December 11 - Pot Luck casserole or soup- sign up to bring if you are able!

December 18 - Pot Luck Pizza - sign up to bring a pizza if you are able!



One with Mystery | Lauren Wright Pittman



Jesus, Light of the World

As we light the Advent candles this season we will respond in song with the refrain from hymn No. 314, Christ Be Our Light.

Christ, be our light!

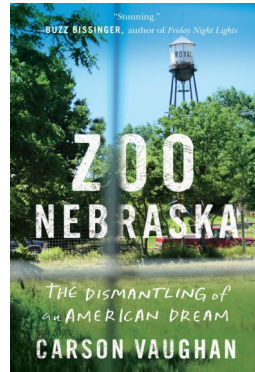
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Advent is an exciting time. It's a time of waiting, yearning, and preparation to welcome the Christ Child into our lives. John 1: 4-5 tells us "What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light."

As Christians, we are reminded about the gift of baby Jesus and the hope that he brings all of us each day and each season. We pray for those do not yet have Christ in their life and will rejoice the day that they do. Isaiah 9:2 reminds us "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned." In our darkest moments, may Christ be our light who shines in our hearts. Go and share the Good News of the coming Christ!



EPC Book Club: Join us on Monday, January 13 as we discuss the book *Zoo Nebraska* by Carson Vaughn. We meet each month during the school year for discussion and refreshments in the Conference Room at Eastridge!

With your participation in our **annual pledge drive**, great and wonderful things can happen at Eastridge. Our goal is for everyone to pledge. If you missed getting a pledge card, they are available at the usher table and the Welcome Desk. You may also give electronically! Check out the "Give" option on the church website.

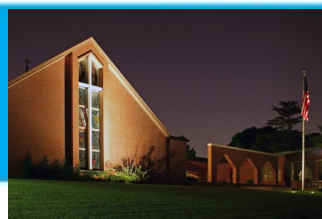


The **Eastridge Food Pantry** received 811 pounds of food November 10 and additional amounts throughout the month

in our 30 Days of Thanks promotion. Thank you Eastridge and Food Pantry partner churches!

Time to think about Per Capita! When each Eastridge member pays his/her per capita, it allows our offerings to fund more items in the general budget. This year, per capita is \$45 per member. Per capita is "the tie that binds" — annual giving that unites the church in the ongoing and essential work that guides of Office of the General Assembly, the life of the Presbyterian Church USA, and benefits every congregation and every mid council ministry.





Shop With SCRIP

The Youth Group will be resurrecting the SCRIP program to help raise funds for their summer mission/conference trips. This is an income-generating program that allows us to get a percentage back from gift card purchases.

SCRIP works by allowing individuals to purchase gift cards by placing an order for the gift card through EPC. We then purchase the gift cards for you and are giving a percentage back from that gift card purchase. For instance, if you were to purchase a Target gift card for \$25, we would receive 2.5% (\$0.63) back from that purchase. Each store offers a different percentage which means the rebate on each card will vary.

One of the things that has changed since EPC has previously worked with the SCRIP program is the ability to reload gift cards online. Some of the businesses allow you to reload your gift cards using



their website which allows you to have immediate access to the gift card. In this case, if you were to purchase a Target gift card, you could reload that card without having to go through the church and we still get the rebate for that card.

This will be a great opportunity for the youth group to earn continual funding throughout the year

while hoping offering a program for something folks are already purchasing. SCRIP has a very long list of retailers they work with so we will most likely be able to meet your gift card needs. With Christmas approaching, we know folks will be buying gift cards and we hope you would consider purchasing them through the youth group.

This is a lot of specific information. Please watch for a Minute for Mission very soon or please feel free to contact Kris Adler-Brammer in the church office for information on purchasing. Thank you for ALL of your support of the youth and our programming.

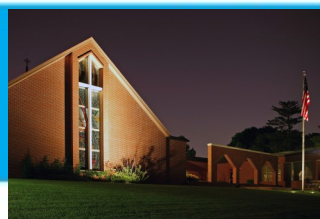
Creating Advent: A Worship and Craft Workshop

On Wednesday, December 11th, we will have a special intergenerational worship experience that will integrate Advent crafts into our worship time together. Participants will have the chance to make crafts while leaning how they fit into our Advent & Christmas story. Each station will have activities that are appropriate for a variety of age groups. We will have some more substantial crafts that will be made as a family along with some simpler crafts that can be made by each member of your family. No matter your crafting abilities, you will leave with something to remind you of your wor-

ship experience. The evening will be hosted by the EPC Youth Group.

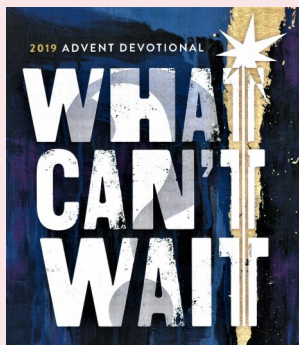
The activities we are doing require supplies and some heavy prep. In order for us to make sure we have enough supplies to accommodate those in attendance, please let us know if you will be joining us for the workshop. You can contact the church office at 402.488.7844 or email Kris Adler-Brammer at kadler-brammer@eastridge.org. A sign-up sheet will also be available on the Welcome Desk.





Advent Devotional:

Check out the Advent devotional plus calendar at the Welcome Desk! Daily (including weekends!) we'll share online from the book.



Eastridge Presbyterian Women Cookie Sale

Just in time for Christmas gatherings, Sunday December 15th, 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 the services starting at 10:00 a.m.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee presented the following list of nominees for church officers at the congregational meeting on November 10, 2019. Welcome new officers/committee members!

Session—Class of 2022

Kris Brenneis (Worship and Music)

Carolyn Olsen (Adult Education)

Carol Ripley (GROW)

Ana Rankin (Class of 2020—Youth)

Greg Tubach (Fellowship)

Trustees—Class of 2022

Mike Laughter

Rex Radcliff

John Rouse

Memorial and Endowment Committee—Class of 2022

Paul Harmon

Robby Shortridge

Nominating Committee—Class of 2021

Sandy Hilsabeck-Hastings

Marge Riemann

Susan Taylor

Deacons—Class of 2022

Carolyn Brandle

Cathy Duling

Jean Dunbar

Sharon Gollehon

Sharon Irvin

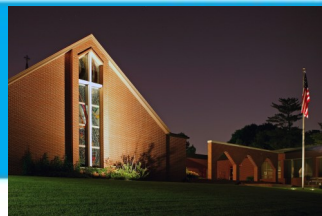
Berna Stading

Garin & Emma Newcomb

Charles Bachinski

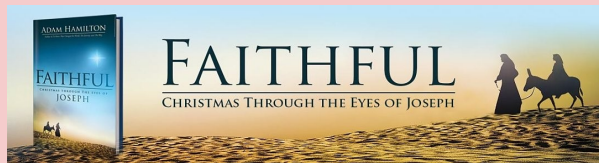
From the Nominating Committee: Robin Hadfield, chair; Mary Amen, Kris Brenneis, Dave Gies, Larry Graham, Gary Kilian, Anne Loudon, Duane Olsen, and Becky Rankin.

Nominating COMMITTEE

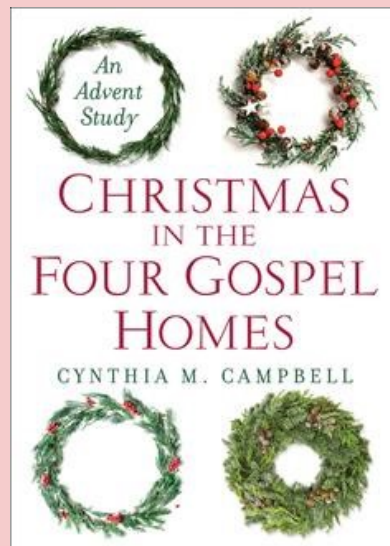


Advent Studies:

Pastors Melodie Jones Pointon and Thomas Dummermuth will lead the study *“Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph”* by Adam Hamilton. Study will be Tuesday afternoons from 4:15-5:15 pm in Huxtable Lounge, starting December 3.



Donna Gustafson will lead the study *“Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes”* by Cynthia Campbell for the Wednesday morning Bible study group. This study is at 10:30 am Wednesdays during Advent, starting December 4.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 21, 2019

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of September 19, 2019, and the congregational meeting of November 10, 2019.

The Session affirmed that communion was served at the 9 and 10:30 a.m. services on November 3, 2019.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon officiated at the funeral service of Mary Urbom on November 2, 2019.

The Session provisionally approved the concept for the Sunrise Road properties, as recommended by the Sunrise Road Property Committee. The provisional approval will allow the committee to apply for grants in the upcoming grant cycle.

The Session approved a one-day retreat for January 11, 2020, in conjunction with partner churches. The focus of the retreat will be the Enneagram.

The Session approved the request from the Youth Committee to begin offering the SCRIP program as a fundraising vehicle for youth activities. The pop-up fundraiser with Ten Thousand Villages was successful, and the Session approved sponsoring it again in 2020.

Rev. Thomas Dummermuth reported that one of the highlights of his month was becoming a U.S. citizen in a ceremony in Omaha, Nebraska, on November 12, 2019.

Kris Adler-Brammer reported on her activities and stated that a continuing concern is sufficient volunteers for the various programs.

Brian Lew reported on his activities, including noting that the Kirk Handbell Ringers led worship at the Lutheran Center.

The Worship Commission reported that plans are underway for a pictorial directory and that online signups will begin in the next two weeks. Photos will be taken on January 14, 15, and 16, 2020.

Thanks were offered to Pam Schumacher for her leadership for the Thanksgiving Dinner, which was a success.

The Outreach Committee reported that it approved sending \$500 from the emerging needs fund to the South Sudan, which has been affected by recent flooding.

The Hunger Action Board reported that 871 pounds of food were returned as part of the Thirty Days of Thanks food drive. Thanks were given to the congregation for the contributions.

A new member class is scheduled for December 8, 2019, at 11:30 a.m.

Rev. Dummermuth reported on the Homestead Presbytery meeting. Presbytery celebrated the 150th anniversaries of four churches. The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Committee is planning work camps for next year in the regions affected by flooding. It is also asking congregations to consider their disaster preparedness plans.

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Advent candlelighting: this year, families/couples/individuals will not be required to read the scripture passage...only light the candle! Please let the office know if you would like to do this. We will light the candle during both Sunday morning services during advent, and all three Christmas Eve services.



Poinsettias will once again be available for purchase to decorate the church during the Advent season. Following Christmas Eve, our Eastridge deacons deliver the flowers to some of our members, or, you may take yours home. Look for more information at the Welcome Desk.



Bistro Theology will take a break in December and meet again in 2020!



New Member Class: interested in what it means to be a part of our faith community at Eastridge? Join us for lunch and conversation on December 8 at 11:30 am. Even if you're not quite ready to join, come to find out more information. Please let the office know if you plan to attend so that we can plan accordingly! Childcare provided.



You can now choose **Eastridge on Amazon Smile!** When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization.



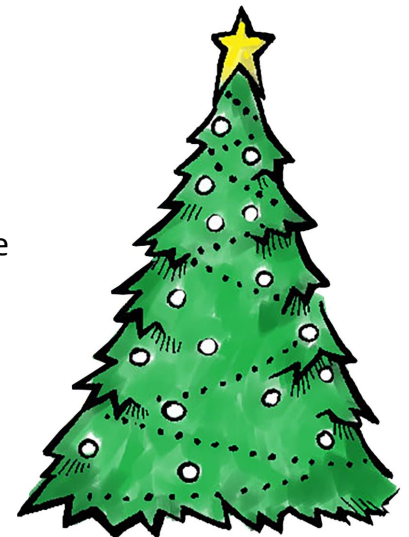
Eastridge Church Staff

- Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon.....Senior Pastor
- Rev. Thomas Dummermuth.....Associate Pastor
- Rev. Dr. John Duling.....Parish Associate
- Kris Adler-Brammer..... Youth and Children's Ministries
- Donna Gustafson..... Office Manager
- Andy Kalnins.....Night/Weekend Custodian
- Dr. Brian Lew.....Director of Music Ministries
- Brent Shaw.....Organist
- Will McGuire.....Worship Leader
- Vince Ruhl.....Audio/Visual Technician
- Jennifer Russell.....Nursery
- Office number.....402-488-7844
- Melodie Jones Pointon: mjonespointon@eastridge.org
- Thomas Dummermuth: tdummermuth@eastridge.org

MEET THE STAFF

The Angel Tree, with opportunities for you to make Christmas special for a child or adult by purchasing gifts, is in the southwest corner of the Welcome Center.

Choose a tag (or more!) from the tree and provide what is listed. Please note the date the gift is to be returned to church on the back of the tag!



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