

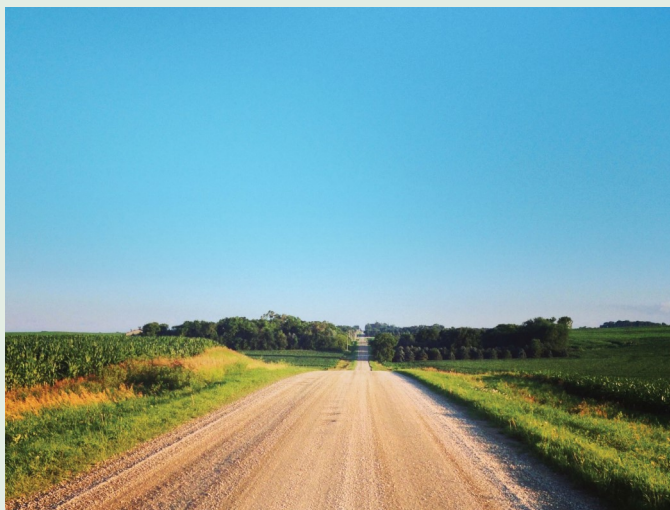
## From the Pastor's Pen...

Happy New Year! I can't believe it's 2020!

They say hindsight is 20/20. Maybe that's why so many people are posting where they were and what they were doing ten years ago.

Looking back, I'm amazed at how many life changes Steve and I went through in our first three years of marriage. We were married, moved states, started new jobs, bought a house, had a miscarriage, and two babies. In hindsight, I can see that when we moved here six and a half years ago, I was struggling spiritually. I'm pretty sure I suffered from some postpartum depression. At the same time, we were moving states again, starting new jobs, and looking for a place to live. I also became sick with what we now know as Graves' Disease, an autoimmune system that attacks the all-important and connected thyroid.

In addition to all of the physical and tangible changes happening in my life, I can now see that I was struggling spiritually. I wasn't my best self, or even much of a "self" for anyone. I felt far from my husband and children, my family, my friends, and (a horrible admission for a pastor), I felt far from God. I have a whole toolbox full of ways to connect spiritually but was unable to use any of them without first seeing that I was spiritually depleted. I wish I



had had a tool to see that more clearly.

My mom was a career counselor for most of my life. As a result, I've taken just about every personality "inventory" there is. Starting in my mid-teens, I've taken the Myers Briggs, (INTP), the Hartman Color Survey (red), HBDI (red), the Gallup Strengthsfinder, Stephen Ministries' Spiritual Inventory, and the Enneagram (8). Pretty much, every time I take one of these "tests" I turn up the same. At least I'm consistent!

There is, however, something different about that last profile... the Enneagram... that I'm particularly drawn to. The Enneagram is one of the oldest spiritual tools we have and is notable because it is "fluid" in nature. It helps to identify what my spirituality looks like when I'm spiritually "healthy," as well as how to know when I'm not spiritually healthy.

This winter, we will be looking at these moments in our own lives with a one-day retreat led by Patty Forsberg; small-group studies; and a sermon series called "Unraveled." Together, we will explore what happens to our spiritual selves when life doesn't go as we have planned, or imagined, it could. Using stories from scripture, and our lives, our hope is that we can grow in our understanding of ourselves, each other, and most importantly, closer to God.

~Melodie



## A Spiritual Retreat based on the Enneagram of Personality

January 11, 2020 8:30 am-2:30 pm

Eastridge Presbyterian Church

Registration: \$10

by phone 402-488-7844 or online: [eastridge.org](http://eastridge.org)

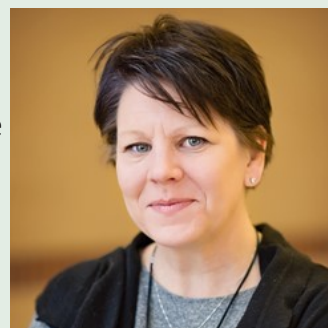
The Enneagram is a model of human nature. It is a profound and comprehensive system for understanding self and others. This personality system has combined the modern psychology and ancient wisdoms to give you a cutting edge technology to understand human nature with new depth and clarity.

Many of us sleepwalk through our days - unaware

of our own motivations for the things we do. Yet each of us naturally lives from either our emotional, intellectual or gut-instinctual center. Discovering our preference helps us wake up to both our gifts and our flaws and awareness brings compassion both for our selves and others. The Enneagram offers direction for more balance in our lives and for growth in healthy ways – toward the beautiful 'image of God' we were created to be.

Patty Forsberg is a spiritual director in Lincoln, Nebraska. She is co-director of Nebraska Contemplative Outreach and teaches and leads retreats with Centering Prayer, Welcoming Prayer, Boundless Compassion, Bio-Spiritual Focusing and the Enneagram. Patty also leads workshops at Contemplate Lincoln.

[pattyforsberg.com](http://pattyforsberg.com)



### NEW SERMON SERIES: UNRAVELED

What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity—or the path we're on—comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we

fear it will be? In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy,

us, for we long to be changed.

This worship series explores 6 stories of unraveled shame, identity,

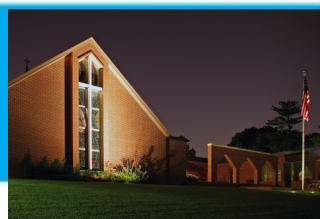
fear, grief, dreams, and expectations.

These are stories where God-meets us in



love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel

the spiraling, unraveling our plans—and us—into something new.



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.

## **Come join us to celebrate the beginning of the New Year with GiFT!**

The next stop in our playful exploration of milestones of life, inspired by Milton Bradley's Game of Life, is many people's favorite: Moving day! Who doesn't like the wonderful process of sorting, packing, moving heavy stuff around... only to finally live among boxes for the next 3 years? Just kidding...

### **Moving: a Fresh Start**

**January 1st, 5:30-7pm.**

Please bring a pot-luck dish to share!

The metaphor of Moving Day will serve as our metaphor, as we reflect on different moves and changes in our biographies. We will talk about what we left behind, what we held on to, and what we gained as we moved through different stages of our lives. Plus, we will eat and play together! What better time to do this than on New Year's Day, when we say farewell to the old year and begin again? **So join us for a very special New Year's Day GiFT!**

### **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

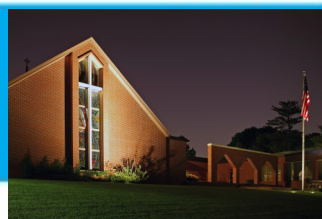
Apr 1 - In Our End a New Beginning



# GiFT

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER





*Welcome, welcome, welcome.*

*I welcome everything that comes to me today  
because I know it's for my healing.*

*I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons,  
situations, and conditions.*

*I let go of my desire for power and control.*

*I let go of my desire for affection, esteem,  
approval and pleasure.*

*I let go of my desire for survival and security.*

*I let go of my desire to change any situation,  
condition, person or myself.*

*I open to the love and presence of God and  
God's action within. Amen*

My friends,

The above prayer is called "The Welcoming Prayer" by Father Thomas Keating. I offer this to the church family as a way to welcome the New Year, but also to regularly use it as one begins their day. It is a simple process of: focusing and letting it sink in; welcoming, and letting go.

Focusing is to connect with the prayer emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Emotionally, it is a release of the tension and burdens we carry. It is letting the feelings of the prayer sink into our spirits and to bathe in the grace of our Lord. Physically, it is even allowing one to sense in their body

where there may be a tension in a muscle area like the shoulders. Feel the ease of the shoulders as if one is being massaged by the Spirit. Take an inventory and let the Holy Spirit massage the body.

Welcoming is connecting to the moment. Welcome everything – feelings of all kinds. When one says to "welcome," it is to name those feelings like sadness, anger, joy, anxiety, or whatever the feeling is. It is strictly the feeling that is being named, not the situation or issue that brought about the feeling. Acknowledge the feeling so one may be freed of it for the day. If it continues, pray to the Holy Spirit to take it. One is welcoming the positive grace of the Lord into their life

this day!

Letting go is when one is ready to go out and face the day! It is letting Him Who takes on our burdens every day be the bearer. We walk in His grace and love every day when we welcome Him.

I conclude with this

inspirational thought by Silvia Ricotti: "Surrender to what is; let go of what was, and have faith in what will be."

I pray all will welcome the new decade in Christ's name.

~Rev. Dr. John J. Duling, Parish Associate



# EASTRIDGE

Presbyterian Church



**The Eastridge Hospice Singers** would like to say "thank you" for the support our congregation has given to this special music ministry for those in hospice care. We began our hospice singing journey in October 2018 with 16 singers and throughout the past year have welcomed 9 additional singers to our ministry. Among our 25 hospice trained singers are people from 8 different denominations which makes for a wonderfully diverse and ecumenical mix of faith traditions. Since beginning our hospice singing journey last December, we have had the honor and privilege of providing 75 singing visits to those receiving hospice care in our community. We also have given five programs to community groups where we've been able to share our journey and explain our ministry. We feel blessed and humbled to be invited to be a part of a person's life journey as we endeavor to bring the peace and comfort of music to them while in hospice care.

If you wish to find out more about our Eastridge Hospice Singers or to schedule a singing visit for someone in hospice care, contact Patty Niemann at 402-432-8353 or [epc.hospice.singers@gmail.com](mailto:epc.hospice.singers@gmail.com). You can also contact the church office at 402-488-7844.

## Holy Friends study: The

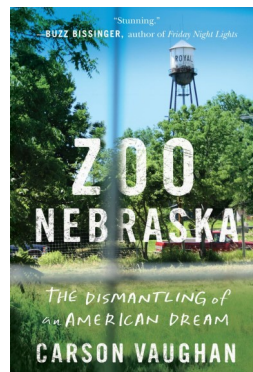
Holy Friends study resumes in January at Bryan West, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. **January 27: Judaism**



**We need volunteers!** We need YOU to: sit at a table in the Welcome Center to greet, direct families to the Huxtable Lounge, and ask them to fill out information for the upcoming directory photo sessions. Contact the office!



**WE NEED YOU**  
To help greet people during our directory photo sessions!



**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.

## Eastridge Mitten/Angel Tree:

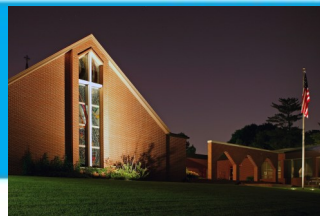
Thank you for your generosity to all who contributed. We had 127 individual angels or ornaments on the tree along with the mittens. Contributions went to Cedars, Aging Partners, Fresh Start, Clinton Elementary, two families in our faith community, and Presbyterian Missions.

Most of the mittens were contributed by the Mulligan family. After the holidays the mittens will be distributed to yet-to-be-determined agencies and schools. ~ Susan Taylor. (Below is a thank you from Clinton):

**Dear Friends of Clinton: On behalf of Clinton children (and families) who will be impacted by your generosity—thank you! Linda Kern, Family Care Coordinator Clinton Elementary School**







## “Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, or in prison?”

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has invited churches to renew their commitments to mission by becoming “Matthew 25” congregations. A Matthew 25 congregation seeks to:

- ♦ Build congregational vitality, by challenging itself to get more joyfully engaged with its community and the world.
- ♦ Dismantle structural racism, by acting to break down practices and thinking that underlie oppression of people of color, and
- ♦ Eradicate systemic poverty, by working to change structures that exploit people who are poor.



## MATTHEW 25

mittee the Session has agreed that Eastridge Presbyterian Church shall become a Matthew 25 congregation. As we live out our commitment, we will be asked to share the story of the impact that our pledge has

made: how our congregation has changed, how we’ve discovered new passions and vitality, how our members have been re-energized as disciples.

Being a Matthew 25 congregation doesn’t require any new programs, committees, or meetings. It isn’t a “check list” and there is no competition with other congregations. It validates a number of programs and activities that Eastridge Presbyterian Church is already doing. But it also challenges us to think more deeply

about Christ’s urgent call for us to be a church of action, where God’s love, justice, and mercy shine forth.

Based on a recommendation from the Outreach Com-

*~The Outreach Committee*

On Sunday, February 2nd, the youth will collect the **Souper Bowl of Caring offering**. This offering was developed by a Presbyterian youth group in South Carolina 30 years ago. At that first offering collection, the youth asked the congregation to give a dollar or two to aid in “tackling” hunger for the city’s homeless population. Thirty years and several thousand churches/organizations later, the Souper Bowl of Caring has collected millions of dollars to help feed those who are hungry. This year, EPC youth will collect for the Souper Bowl of Caring after the services on February 2nd. The collections will go to the Food Pantry at EPC in order to

help purchase food to serve our clients. We hope you will prayerfully consider giving as the youth work to “tackle” hunger right here in our community.



# EASTRIDGE

## Presbyterian Church



### Dear Eastridge Church family:

The money raised for the Eastridge Presbyterian Women's cookie sale totaled over \$ 550. This money will be used for mission projects yet to be determined. We appreciate all those who set up, baked, sold, purchased and donated to the cause. This is EPW's only fundraiser and we thank you for making it successful!

~Nan Nelson and Anna Meier

### SESSION HIGHLIGHTS: DECEMBER

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of November 21, 2019.

The Session affirmed that communion was served at the 9 and 10:30 a.m. services on December 1, 2019.

The Session approved the request of the Outreach Committee for Eastridge Presbyterian Church to become a Matthew 25 congregation. This is a Presbyterian Church (USA) initiative for congregations to adopt Jesus' call in Matthew 25 to take our living faith into our communities and the world.

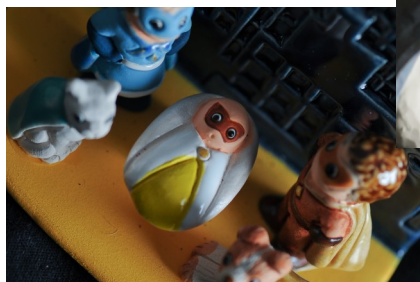
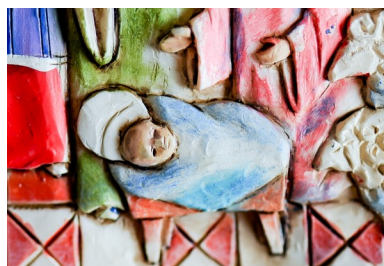
The Session approved the request of the Personnel Committee to provide year-end thank you gifts to non-pastoral staff, if the way be clear and the budget allows.

The Session scheduled the ordination and installation of officers for Sunday, January 12, 2020. Elders will be ordained at the 9 a.m. service and Deacons will be ordained at the 10:30 a.m. service. The Session scheduled the congregational meeting for Sunday, January 26, 2020, between worship services. Services will be scheduled at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m., with each service scheduled for 45 minutes.

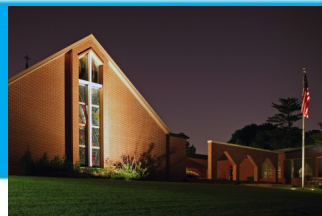
The Hunger Action Board reported that Eastmont donated 288 pounds of food and \$1,096 in cash for its Thanksgiving drive.

The Outreach Committee reported that the Christmas Eve offering will be split between the EPC Care and Share Fund and funds for the accessible ramp to the pantry building.

### Baby Jesuses (shown during Melodie's Christmas Eve sermon and on the monitor in the Eastridge Welcome Center)







**ADVENT WORKSHOP:** This year the youth hosted one of our Advent worship experiences. During this event, they lead a devotion that talked about some of the things and people in the Christmas story. Following those devotions, the participants were invited to make a craft item to keep in their home and remember the importance. We had a very small group that joined our youth but those that were present had a great time and found it meaningful.



## Bistro Theology is Back!

When: Thursday, January 30, from 7:00-9:00 pm

Where: The Piedmont Bistro by Venue

### What Bistro Theology is:

a monthly conversation in Lincoln NE about stuff that matters.

a gathering space for people of all faith and non-faith backgrounds to come together and respectfully dialogue and question over life, spirituality, culture and society.

a celebration of our community and how we can challenge and learn

from each other.

*"In the Church of Jesus Christ there can and should be no non-theologians."* — Karl Barth

*"Theology begins with wonder and with unanswered questions."* — Avery Cardinal Dulles

Come join us for dinner, or just for drinks, and great conversations about stuff that matters.

# Bistrò Theology

FAITH. DRINKS. DISCUSSION. QUESTIONS.

### What Bistro Theology is not:

a slick new evangelism program.

a Bible study at the bar.

a church service.

a debate club.



Follow us on Facebook for more info:  
[www.facebook.com/bistrotheology](http://www.facebook.com/bistrotheology)



# EASTRIDGE

## Presbyterian Church

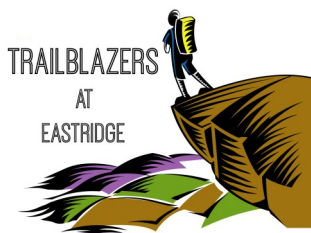


**ANNUAL REPORT and UPCOMING DATES:** Committees: Please turn in your annual reports! You may submit via email to: [office@eastridge.org](mailto:office@eastridge.org). If you'd like to see what was submitted for your committee/group last year, ask in the office. The annual meeting will be Sunday, January 26 following the 9:00 service.

The **new church officers and deacons** will be installed/ordained on Sunday, January 12. Elders at 9:00 am, Deacons at 10:30 am.



**Trailblazers:** The Trailblazers will meet on January 17 at 7:00 pm for a Games and Soup Supper evening in Huxtable Lounge.



**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 January 12 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

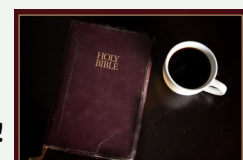
Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon.....Senior Pastor  
 Rev. Thomas Dummermuth.....Associate Pastor  
 Rev. Dr. John Duling.....Parish Associate  
 Kris Adler-Brammer.....Youth and Children's Ministries  
 Donna Gustafson.....Office Manager  
 Andy Kalnins.....Night/Weekend Custodian  
 Dr. Brian Lew.....Director 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](mailto:mjonespointon@eastridge.org)  
 Thomas Dummermuth: [tdummermuth@eastridge.org](mailto:tdummermuth@eastridge.org)

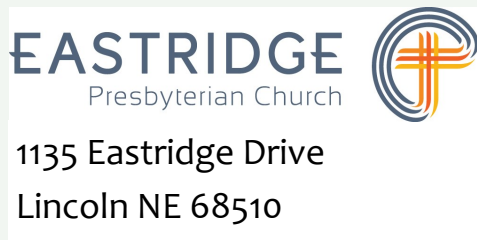
## MEET THE STAFF

On November 17-19, the youth held a **pop-up sale** in conjunction with **Ten Thousand Villages**. We had a very successful sale thanks to all of you who shopped. The sale raised \$3,988.17 for Ten Thousand Villages and the youth received \$559.42 for the youth fund! THANK YOU to all who supported Ten Thousand Villages and the EPC Youth.



**Wednesday Night Bible Study** (formerly held on Thursdays) will begin again on January 8 at 6:30 pm in the Reading Room (downstairs, across from L13). We are studying the books of the Bible, beginning with James (our goal is a chapter a week). Join us!





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