



## From the Pastor's Pen...

There's a song we sing at our 10:30 am service that has been running through my mind since the beginning of the year. Of course, my favorite version is done by our band, but I've learned to also love the Kutless version. It's called "King of My Heart." I love it not only for its melody, but also because of the words, "Let the King of my heart... Be the mountain where I run/The fountain I drink from/Oh He is my song. Let the King of my heart/Be the shadow where I hide/The ransom for my life/Oh He is my song."

For various reasons, though, I've been having some trouble with the bridge, "You are good, good, oh," repeated several times.

We tend to plan ahead around here. Sometimes we plan up to six months or more ahead. Our planning for this winter is indicative of what we were feeling at the time, that we (Thomas and I) were individually wanting to spend some time focusing on our spiritual health. So we made arrangements for the Enneagram retreat with Patty Forsberg, planned out the Unraveled sermon and worship series, and prayed that our congregation would be receptive to this kind of spirituality laid bare in our souls. At this point, we've heard from many of you that this desire we have been feeling is

in your heart, too.

All of it runs together for me, as I admit to you all that there are definitely times that the words from this bridge get stuck in my throat. I think it's meant to be praise, and I find it hard to sing "You are good, good" when I see and experience hurt in myself and in others. So I researched the origin of this song, its writer, and its story. It was written by

Sarah and John Mark McMillan, and "was birthed out of a season of pain." Sarah writes, "This song is about the tension we often find ourselves in this life. At the time I wrote this song, I was processing the divorce of my parents and at the same time experiencing the overwhelming joy of having children of my own. Both experiences changed my identity so deeply. I wrote 'King of My Heart' to remind myself that there was no joy or sorrow that could dilute the pure goodness of who God was. Everything I thought I lost, could actually be found in the Force of His goodness."

This brought to mind something else I read recently, from pastor and author Carol Howard Merritt in her book, "Healing Spiritual Wounds." She reflects on Hosea 6:1, "Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is God who has torn, and God will heal us; God has struck down, and God will bind us up." (continued on following page)





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She says, “I can’t cram those words into any sort of neat and tidy theological system. They aren’t meant to be a divine explanation of who God is; rather, the poetry reflects the cry of an imperfect people. The words give voice to the broken bitterness people feel when wounded, even as they articulate a hope in a God who heals, a God who knows how to clean out the bleeding gashes and bind the lacerations securely enough so that they could recover properly. God has torn. God will heal.”

As I reflect on what this means for us as individuals and as a congregation, I find myself wanting to say, “God sees you. God sees your hurts and your failures. God sees your joys and your successes. God sees your struggles. God sees your triumphs.” I believe the spiritual work we have engaged in this season will bear spiritual fruit as we find ourselves spiritually unraveled and real before our God and

each other. Like Howard Merritt, I can’t explain my faith in this God who tears down and builds up. I can only share the truth I have discovered... that the only healing for my heart is to “Let the King of my heart be the mountain where I run, the fountain I drink from, the shadow where I hide, the ransom for my life.”

May God bless us all, as we continue to be unraveled and seek the shalom found in God.

~Melodie

<http://www.hallels.com/articles/18632/20171228/5-of-our-favorite-renditions-of-king-of-my-heart.htm>

Merritt, Carol Howard. *Healing Spiritual Wounds* (pp. 20-21). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.



## SERMON SERIES: UNRAVELED

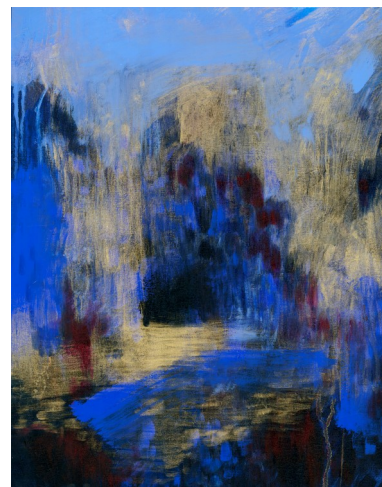


What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity—or the path we’re on—comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we fear it will be?

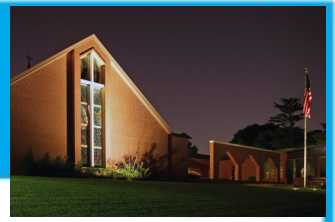
In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn’t have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed.

This worship series explores 6 stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and expectations. These are stories where God meets us in

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







*When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand.*

—Henri Nouwen

## Join us for our February GiFT as we talk about Crisis and Healing

February 5th, 5:30-7pm.

What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads?

We live in a world that is eager to see quick results. A magical cure. A fix to “go back to normal.”

But the truth is, as Rachel Held Evans says, “the church doesn’t offer a cure. It doesn’t offer a quick fix. The church offers death and resurrection. The church offers the messy, inconvenient, gut-wrenching, never-ending work of healing and reconciliation. The church offers grace” (Searching for Sunday p. 209).

This is our intention for this month’s GiFT: an open invitation to walk with each other, share one another’s pain — and to offer each other grace.

Come join us as we practice being church to each other.

### 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?

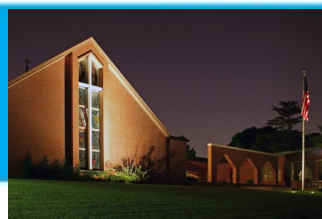
GiFT takes place on the first Wednesday each month. A GiFT event begins at 5:30 pm with a joint dinner and a time of fellowship in the fellowship hall. At the heart of a GiFT evening is a fun interactive experience that centers around milestones of our lives, and engages all ages. GiFT also offers practical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

### Future Milestones:

Mar 4 - Retirement: Re-committing Our Faith

Apr 1 - In Our End a New Beginning





**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.

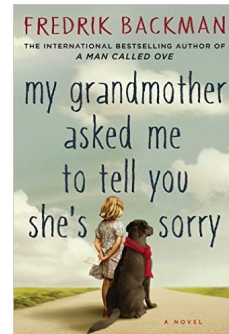


**Devotion ministry:** We are always looking for more devotion writers for our online ministry! Contact the office if you are interested.

**YANA coffee group:** Join us February 18 at 9:30 am in Huxtable Lounge. Contact Berna Stading for more info. YANA (You Are Not Alone) is a group for women who have lost their husbands.



**EPC Book Club:** Join us on Monday, February 10 at 7pm to discuss "my grandmother asked me to tell you she's sorry" by Fredrick Backman. We meet each month during the school year for discussion and refreshments in the Conference Room at Eastridge!



### **SESSION HIGHLIGHTS For January**

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of December 19, 2019.

The Session affirmed that communion was served at the 9 and 10:30 a.m. services on January 5, 2020.

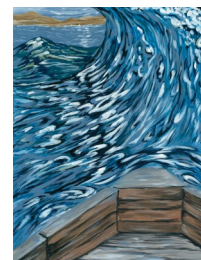
The Session approved the request of the Worship Commission to schedule a single service at 10 a.m. on Youth Sunday, February 2, 2020.

The Session approved the request of the Worship Commission to collect a "noisy offering" on the fifth Sunday of any month (March, May, August, November). In addition to the regular offering, change will be collected in tin containers and the funds will be used to support the choral scholars.

The Session approved the 2020 budget as amended.

The Board of Trustees reported that an insurance claim has been submitted for the power surge which caused damage to the organ.

**New Sermon Series:** On the Monday following each Sunday's sermon, check out the online devotions for more scripture and reading! Reprinted with permission from *A Sanctified Art*.





## Worship Volunteers Needed: Communion Preparers

As the Old English proverb says, "Many hands make light work." For those who have been preparing our congregational communion over the years, just a few hands have done most of the work. We are asking for more volunteers to help with communion preparation, which primarily involves: cutting the bread (at your home); bringing it Sunday morning in the 8:00 hour and putting it on the communion plates; pouring the juice into cups or carafes (depending on which service); and clean up afterwards. Someone else arranges and schedules the communion servers. Further, someone else purchases the bread and the juice. Finally,

most of the cleanup can occur after the 9:00 service because at the 10:30 service, the pastors distribute communion by intinction (and fewer dishes are involved). We



currently have three volunteers who are among those few who have been doing this work for many, many years. We would like three more volunteers. With six total volunteers, each person would be responsible for 2 months. January and February are taken care of, so we would like to have the new volunteers in place before the first Sunday in March. To volunteer, please contact Donna in the office. If you have any further questions before volunteering, ask Kris Brenneis, Alinda Stelk, or Pastor Melodie. Thanks in advance for prayerfully considering whether you can help with this vital ministry.

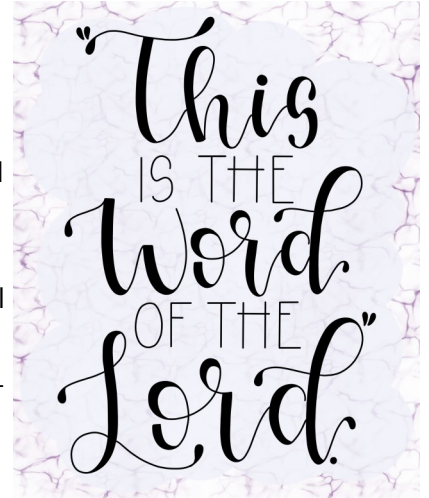
Eastridge welcomes **Special Musicians** on Sundays! **Special Musicians** is a non-profit devoted to fighting stigmas and breaking down boundaries through the power of music.



## Worship Volunteers Needed: Liturgists

If you normally attend the 9:00 service, don't mind standing in front of the congregation (behind the pulpit!) and leading the congregation in the Call to Worship and other liturgical call and responses, we need a few more volunteers to add to the liturgist list. The liturgist is usually finished with

liturgy duties by 9:15 or 9:20 and then you may return to sit with the congregation. It really is very painless, and Robin Hadfield (the volunteer coordinator) would like a few more names to add to her contact list. If you feel like this is a way you could contribute to worship, please contact Robin Hadfield at [robinhad@gmail.com](mailto:robinhad@gmail.com).



## The Road Back to You

**The Road Back to You:** Two new studies based on the Enneagram test of personality are starting! Kurt and Wendi Beck will be leading one, and Pastors Melodie and Thomas will be leading another. Please contact the church office for more information.

**Talk Heart 2 Heart:** Eastridge Faith Partners recommends this site for parents! [www.talkheart2heart.org](http://www.talkheart2heart.org). There is a Facebook page as well.







## FROM PASTOR JOHN DULING:

In support of the recent retreat that the congregation had on the Enneagram, I would like to devote some columns for suggested spiritual practices that could help one claim and nurture their Enneagram type. What I would suggest is to enter into dialog or open oneself to what God's Holy Spirit would clarify about each person's type. This column will suggest that one discover what journaling could provide as a prayerful exercise of discernment and openness to one's type. Even if one does not choose to consider their Enneagram type, journaling is a good exercise for anyone.

Here are some very general suggestions for this exercise:

- Begin with silence. The appropriate timing for one's silence is very personal. Some could begin their day with journaling or conclude their day with journaling. The time of silence could be a minute or as many as 3 or 5 minutes. Silence the world noise and let God's Spirit direct this silent time.
- Look up a daily devotional such as the church's devotion found on the website or from one's devotional guide like Upper Room or These Days. Another idea is to react to the challenges of the Sunday sermon from Pastors Melodie or Thomas. God has an impact through any of those re-

sources.

- When one feels ready, begin writing in a journal or some pad of paper that is near one's favorite easy chair, bed, or desk. The style of writing is as varied as one's desire. Some have written poetry. Others have written a diary-like entry of how they feel God is working in their lives. I write a "Dear God" letter. It is a written letter prayerfully seeking what God would have me do or consider for the day. I find that my time to journal is best in the morning.

- How much one writes is very personal – short paragraphs or pages. No limits. It is letting you express your feelings to God.

- Next, when one is done, take time to listen for God or nudges or impressions or thoughts that hit. Note any questions, words, or phrases. Those are God inspired.

- How this may be of support to one's Enneagram type is permitting one to open up to God through some form of devotion. Journaling is a good means to do that.

- I conclude with a suggested devotional website and email that one may connect to for further reflection.

Find: [enneathought@enneagraminstitute.com](mailto:enneathought@enneagraminstitute.com)

They put out an email devotional for

all types every day. Those devotions can be a great guide.

*In Christ, Pastor John Duling, Parish Associate*



### Presbyterian Pilgrimage to be March 26 - 29 at Calvin Crest

If anyone has not been on a Presbyterian Pilgrimage, now is a great opportunity! Pastor John Duling and his wife, Cathy are on the team to provide some inspirational and prayerful care for all pilgrims who participate -- that includes anyone.

What happens at the Presbyterian Pilgrimage? If anyone has heard of Cursillo, or Walk to Emmaus, it is very similar: but tailored for Presbyterians. Still, anyone from any denomination or seeker is invited to attend. It includes inspiring talks, small group activities, worship, praise music, and good meals provided by the camp. Every pilgrim is treated with great hospitality and grace and open to truly wonderful surprises. It can be a life changing event!

If anyone is interested about Presbyterian Pilgrimage, contact Pastor John Duling at 402-981-6073 or talk with him at church before or after worship.

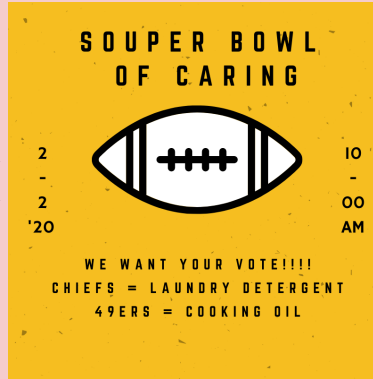


## MINISTRY WITH YOUTH

Faith Connection for Youth:

Sunday, February 2nd, the Middle School and High School youth will lead us in one service of worship at 10:00am. Worship will focus on the hymn Come Thou Fount as well as the ascension story. They will talk about how we can give our hearts to God and others. During the service, the youth will share their work with you as they have written the prayers and liturgy along with two of the youth who will share the sermon for the day. Along with the service, we will also have a fundraising luncheon to follow in the Huxtable Lounge. The funds raised from this luncheon will go toward our summer trips to Kansas City and Memphis, TN.

In addition to Youth Sunday on the 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 collections, the youth asked the congregation to give a dollar or two to aid in "tackling" hunger for the city's homeless population. 30 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 like to do something different to support the food pantry at EPC. We are going to ask you to vote for who you think will win the Super Bowl based on the item that you bring. If you think that the Kansas City Chiefs will win, we would like you to vote for them by bringing a container of laundry detergent. If you think the 49ers will win the Super Bowl, we would like you to vote for them by bringing a bottle of cooking oil. Let's see if EPC can correctly pick the Super Bowl winner as well as stock the pantry with laundry detergent and cooking oil!

## Bistro Theology is Back!

When: Thursday, February 27, 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



### What Bistro Theology is not:

a slick new evangelism program.

a Bible study at the bar.

a church service.

a debate club.

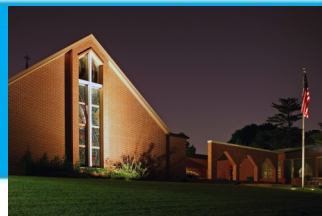
*"Theology begins with wonder and with unanswered questions."* — Avery Cardinal Dulles

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



Follow us on Facebook for more info:

[www.facebook.com/bistrotheology](http://www.facebook.com/bistrotheology)



**We welcomed these new members on January 12!** Katie Allen, Wahadi Allen, Joanne Johansen, Tiffani Johansen, Tom Johansen, Charles Kendeigh, William (Bill) Short.

Some thoughts shared by our new members:

- ◆ “I am sincere in my purpose, love of life, love of country and of family.”
- ◆ “I am experiencing a great time of exploration in Lincoln on my own away from family for the longest time. I plan to live here and help the community and grow myself as a better person. “
- ◆ “I am new to church. I am excited to be a part of

something bigger than myself. I am excited to learn more. I am excited to grow my understanding and knowledge of faith.”

- ◆ “I believe in and practice servant leadership.”

**We are excited to welcome you to Eastridge Presbyterian Church!**

**You can now choose Eastridge on Amazon Smile!**

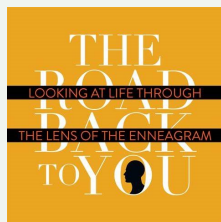


When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer’s selected charitable organization. Go to: [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)





The family of **Jack Steven** invite you to join them for an open house to celebrate Jack's goth birthday. The celebration will be held Sunday, March 8 from 2:30 to 4:30 in the Welcome Center.



The **Wednesday Morning Bible Study** group begins *The Road Back to You* study on February 5. This group meets weekly throughout the year.

**Trailblazers:** The Trailblazers will attend *The Importance of Being Earnest* on Friday, Feb 7 at the Lincoln Community Playhouse!



### 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

### Make a Joyful Noise!

Eastridge has proven time and again how much our congregation values music as one means of worship through both services. One of the ways we achieve this is through our choral scholars. These college students receive a stipend each semester to help round out the beautiful sounds of our choir! This year, the Worship and Music Advisory Committee has a new way to raise funds for continuing the choral scholar program. Every month where there are 5 Sundays, we will do a special time where we can make a Joyful Noise ! We ask that you bring any and all spare change to throw in a tin and pass around to make as much noise as possible in support of our Choral Scholar Program! March 29 is the first 5th Sunday of the calendar year- so bring your extra change to make lots of Joyful Noise so we can continue to bring in joyful voices to make music and worship with us!



**EASTRIDGE**  
Presbyterian Church



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