"And then..."

While on Facebook recently, I really resonated with my friend, Amber Henry Neuroth's post. She said, "This is going to be a rough month or so of 'anniversaries.' One year since the last time I saw my parents in person, ate at a restaurant, had a church celebration..., flew on a plane, skied, had people over inside my house, hugged anyone outside my household, walked into school, walked into a church full of people. These anniversaries are beginning for me and maybe for you too. I'm grieving each one and wondering if some of them will ever go back to the way they were. I'm also trying to balance the grief with the small celebrations of new things I did and learned, all the extra hugs I have received from my boys, but it is hard. Love and prayers to you as we move through this anniversary season."

From this point on, we will mark time not by what we did do - ("remember last Christmas when we were all together?"); but by what we didn't do - (March 15 was the first time we worshipped together only online.") It's a lot of anniversaries, big and small, and a lot of grieving.

"And then..."

It's Lent again. The season we, as Christians, traditionally examine our mortality, stretch our spiritual muscles, and really focus on our relationship with God. I feel as though I've been living in a yearlong Lent, though, coming face to face with my own mortality and the mortality of my family, friends, and our congregation. Finally, finally, with the distribution and administration of vaccines, we have grounding for the hope of what happens next.

"And then..."

But we do not really know what happens next, do we? As we work toward herd immunity, I've noticed the knot in the pit of my stomach start to loosen. Even as nothing has really changed - we're still advised to wear masks, wash our hands, and keep our distance, there is something that has changed. It's in me. There's a letting go of the anxiety, fear, and unknowing, the missing of family and friends. In its place is a growing (but frail) hope.

"And then..."

Mark is a quick gospel, full of words that give a sense of urgency to the story being told. A read through reveals that from the moment of his baptism, Jesus is on the move throughout the countryside, healing, teaching, and feeding. As we move through the narrative, we find that there is a growing sense of fear: the healed don't share their healing...because they are afraid; Peter denies Jesus...because he is afraid. The naming of these fears is intentional, as Mark tells the gospel story for a people whose world is forever changing with the fall of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. Mark tells this story of hope to a people living in fear.

"And then..." (continued on next page)
All the way through Mark, we are led to the "next thing" by those words, and then. Maybe we're a little immune to those words, and the rush they imply as we reach the last chapter and verse. "And then" very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen they went to the tomb. (16:2)

What they find there should change their lives, as in the other gospels, with running and sharing and eventually celebrating. We do not find that in Mark. In the oldest manuscripts, Mark ends this way..."They went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." (16:8)

"And then..."

What comes next? I like the interpretation of this gospel that notes the many times throughout when the apostles (in Mark, these are the ones who are given the power and authority to teach and perform deeds in Jesus' name) don't act and don't do what they have been told and shown to do. In this interpretation, the argument is that in the sharing and hearing of this story, we - the reader and listener - have become apostles as well. In this interpretation, the greater truth of the gospel is this:

"And then...depends on you and me."

Clearly this ending is not the end of the story. And Mark is not the only one telling it. This is a story that is told again and again in word and in deed. It's a story of hope in the jails and the prison cells (Acts 16:16-40), of peace and reconciliation in the midst of disagreement and division (Ephesians 2:14), of inclusion for the outsider (Galatians 3:28). It's a story that we tell in how we live our lives, in word and in deed, by the power and authority that is given to us in the name of Jesus Christ, in whose name we are baptized.

"And then..."

How do we tell the story of our faith over the last year? This Lent, we are focusing on the small and doable. Like the apostles, we will find ourselves moving through our fears and into the hope of Christ. It may take some time, as we grieve and celebrate at once, learning again and again that the sure and certain hope of the risen Christ is in both.

May God bless you all this Lent and Easter season. May it be one of resurrection hope!

~Melodie
Session Highlights: February

The Session learned that LifeTouch is no longer printing church directories, but Eastridge was provided a copy of the proofs. Larry Graham has agreed to print the directories. Church members who wish to receive a copy of the pictorial directory will be asked to make a free will contribution to cover the costs.

The Session heard a report from the Reopening Committee, which is making plans for allowing groups to return to the building. The committee is also making plans for the resumption of worship in the building.

EPC Book Club:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Patrick Radden Keefe</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Braised Pork</td>
<td>An Yu</td>
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<td>May 10</td>
<td>Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family</td>
<td>Robert Kolker</td>
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<td>June 14</td>
<td>Dear Edward</td>
<td>Ann Napolitano</td>
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AFTER WORSHIP CHATS in MARCH:

March 7: Kevin Shinn, a 30-year Lincoln resident, is a chef and writer: “Bread & Cup: beyond simple food and drink.” Find his words and music at 55degrees.us

March 14: A professor at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, SD, Dr. Richard Swanson teaches courses that explore biblical interpretation, interpretive theory, and the ways people live and hope. Because he is convinced that change is the only reliable constant, he spends his time studying how change provokes new readings of biblical texts. He has written five books and numerous articles. Because of his interest in performance, he has worked closely with the Augustana Theatre Department for several years. As a result of this collaboration, he has written a number of plays. His play, When the World Was Wild and Waste, won several awards at the Kennedy Center Regional College Theatre Festival, including awards for scenic design and playwriting. His most recent play, Real as Air, explores his sister’s life with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease). He received his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Luther Seminary. Before beginning his doctoral studies, he was a parish pastor for six years.

March 21: Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Brent Shaw got his Master degrees in Music and in Ministry in North Carolina and has served at several churches in capacities as organist and in youth, children, music, worship, missions, and education ministries. He teaches organ locally, ages children to adults and at the collegiate level. He has a passion for Christ, for leading people of all ages into worship, and encouraging them to be passionate worshipers and worship leaders that follow Christ’s examples to serve others. He and his family are blessed to have two children.
Lenten Monastery at Home

Feb 27 through March 6

Longing for a Lenten retreat - but you can’t get away?

Join us for Virtual Lenten Monastery: a week of intention and reflection in the midst of your daily activities and regular commitments.

Each morning, you will receive a text or email with a verse from scripture, a question, and a short exercise which you can do sometime throughout the day.

Every night at 9 pm, we will meet by Zoom for 30 minutes of shared reflection and contemplation.

Interested? Contact Pastor Thomas: tdummermuth@eastridge.org or text @lentenmo to 81010

2021 MAYOR’S PRAYER BREAKFAST: APRIL 7 at 7:30 a.m.

The theme for the 37th Annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast is “Faith, Spirituality, and the Struggle for Racial Justice.” The program will focus on the influence of Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, the first civil rights leader to meet with Mahatma Gandhi and became the spiritual mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Keynote speakers will be Parker J. Palmer, world-renown Quaker author, educator, and activist, and Rev. Dr. Gregory C. Ellison II, an ordained Baptist minister and Associate Professor of theology at Emory University.

The program also will include remarks by Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, sacred readings, prayers, and music from a variety of Lincoln faith communities. The event will be held as a live web event accessible through local government channels. For more information and to RSVP, go to: https://bit.ly/3k76rA3
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Eastridge Church Directory:

Our photo directory that we began planning in 2019 is still a work in progress! Lifetouch suspended operations during the height of the pandemic but was able to get a proof to us before they stopped printing directories (we understand this is a business move related to the pandemic). Thankfully, we have a solution: Eastridge member and owner of Print Solutions, Larry Graham, will be printing them for us! **Free will donations will be accepted to cover the costs of printing.** We hope to have them soon!

Lenten micro-practices:

Each day, Pastor Thomas has been posting the daily micro-practice (from the booklet mailed out) online in the Facebook group, Eastridge Presbyterian Community. Check it out! There’s also a chance to comment on each practice/day. If you didn’t receive a booklet, contact the office. There are also some extra copies of the booklets available at the Welcome Desk.

EPC Book Club:

Meetings are the second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm. For a complete list of this year’s picks, head to the church website on the calendar page. March pick: *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland* by Patrick Radden Keefe.

We have **Eastridge T-shirts!** Let the office know if you are interested in a short or long sleeve t-shirt with the Eastridge logo. Black, in a variety of sizes. No cost, but donation accepted!
Join us this Lent and Holy Week!

Watch our **Eastridge Presbyterian Community Facebook Group** for daily micro-practices throughout the season!

**Virtual Monastery**, February 27–March 6

**Sunday Worship** online, February 28–March 21 on Facebook, Youtube, or dial (402)372-5480

**Wednesday Mid-week Worship**, March 3–March 24, 6:30 pm (on Zoom)
  Meeting ID: 810 9321 9244 Passcode: EPCLENT or dial +1 312 626 6799

**Palm Sunday Worship**, March 28, 2021
  9 am Parking Lot In-Person Worship Service
  10 am Online Service on Facebook, Youtube, or dial (402)372-5480

**Maundy Thursday Communion Service**, April 1, 2021, 6:30 pm (on Zoom)
  Meeting ID: 810 9321 9244 Passcode: EPCLENT or dial +1 312 626 6799

**Good Friday Service**, April 2, 2021, 6:30 pm Parking Lot In Person

**Easter Sunday**, April 4, 2021
  8 am Early Bird Parking Lot In-Person Worship Service: with communion,
  followed by Eastridge's "traditional" orange juice and donut breakfast
  10 am Online Service: on Facebook, Youtube, or dial (402)372-5480
  featuring Hallelujah Chorus sung by local PC(USA)choirs
**Re-opening Survey:** Did you complete the online survey we mailed out via Constant Contact? If not, please take a moment to complete. Mailed copies (to those whom we are aware are without email) were sent out the week of February 21.

Your response to the signs made available by the Outreach Committee and Antiracism Taskforce has been great, so great that we have nearly given out our initial order of the yard signs! We still have several of the 9 x 12 window signs available. Contact the office if you’d like one, or stop in the Welcome Center and pick one up (in the bookcase near office area).