



From the Pastor's Pen...

One of the habits I found it necessary to return to during the pandemic was returning to Facebook as a way of catching up and communicating with friends and family near and far. It was on a recent scroll through Facebook that I briefly glanced at this picture, posted by our office manager and professional photographer, Donna. I had actually just come from a meeting where we all joked about trying to get "people in line" - like herding cats! - we commented! The comment was made about life during these times - in faith, in politics, in the pandemic - trying to get a group of individuals to agree and do the same thing seems nearly impossible! In that context, I wonder, how come we don't say, "in line like turtles!?"

Over the past year, I think we have been confronted with some big issues that aren't going to go away, in our society, in our community, in our country, and around the world. It's the headlines in our news - the inequalities that are woven into our society so much that we can't even see them; including race, gender, finances, health care, education. It feels like herding cats, trying to identify which one to address first. I also know that it is easy for us to believe once again that these things are happening only to us, here, but there is the potential for conflict and division everywhere around the world, in India, in Sudan and South Sudan, in South Africa, in Northern Ireland, in Guatemala, and Honduras. I can tell you that I don't know how to solve these problems, and I don't know where to start. But I do believe this: until we find our common purpose, we will never be able to stand together.

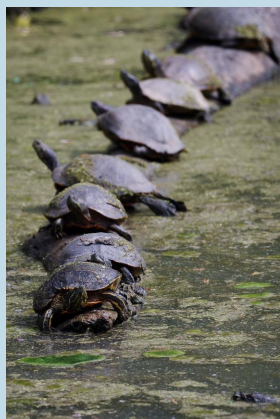
Our Easter and Pentecost theme this year is simple: Spirit. In studying the texts in Acts and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we find there the gifts of the spirit are many: the gift of promise, hope, unity, healing, love, reconciliation, and community. What we find in these texts is that the issues that seem overwhelming to us are not new. As the early church quickly grew, they had to learn how to be the church in community with others. It's a lesson we are still learning today.

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Later, on another scroll through Facebook, this picture of lined up turtles popped up again, this time much bigger. This time I stopped to really look at the picture and realized that the turtles were all sitting on a log in the middle of water. Some of my initial amusement gave way to wonder and amazement as I realized the turtles didn't line up without reason. As Donna later told me, "Turtles line up on logs so they can be in the warm sun. Lines of turtles aren't uncommon. It happens everywhere, because they all want the same thing." Images of the turtles at our own zoo popped into my head, of turtles swimming to the log and lining up. Here's what I remember about those turtles: every time a new turtle joins the line, all the other turtles have to adjust. They have to move this way, or that way, get used to being squished. Occasionally, one falls off, swims away, and rejoins later. They come from all directions, and they don't always face the same way. They work it out, though - because they have the same purpose, the same reason for being on the log.

I'm sure this analogy breaks down somewhere, and I doubt "in line like turtles" is going to take off as a saying. I am certainly am not a turtle expert! Maybe you're willing to look at the simple initial observation of turtles in a line and draw a lesson for somewhere in your life or our shared community life where there is division and disunity and revisit to the initial reason you came together.

Many Blessings, Melodie

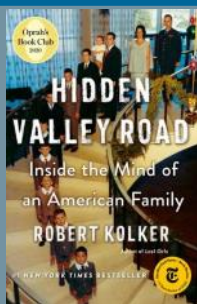
EASTRIDGE SIGNS:



We've purchased a few more yard signs and they are available in the welcome center. We also still have some laminated 9" x 12" signs available, as well as a new and exciting option: 3" x 4" clings that can be placed in your car, your home, on your water bottle or coffee cup. They will be available this morning, and in the welcome center .

Any of these can be shared with friends and family who are not EPC members.

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. May pick: *Hidden Valley Road* by Robert Kolker. Join us May 10 at 7:00 pm in Huxtable Lounge! Book club members: bring your suggestions for our 2021-2022 list to the May meeting so that we can compile a list to vote on.



Dear Eastridge Presbyterian Church

After the year that we've all had, kids need connection. Connection with others, connection with caring adults, connection with God and connection to nature. Calvin Crest Camp, Conference and Retreat Center can provide all of this for the children and youth in your congregation.

With several significant modifications, Calvin Crest is offering summer camp. Registration is open and space is limited.

We are not sending out brochures this summer. Check out the Calvin Crest website to sign up!

Together, we can help children and youth connect in meaningful ways!

Thank You!

Craig Huffman

Executive Director

P.S. Camp begins in early June so please make use of this material soon!



Eastridge Presbyterian Women met Wednesday, April 21 for their first Gathering since last fall. A speaker from City Impact shared their mission. Pictured at left are attendees. Join us next month in Huxtable Lounge as we learn about: Nebraska History Museum "Lewis and Clark": The Voyage of Discovery and Nebraska (Speaker: Sharon Kennedy)



On Sunday, May 16th we will celebrate our graduating High School seniors at the 9:00am in-person service. In order to accommodate our graduates, families, and the congregation, we will hold worship in the parking lot. Following the service, we will have cupcakes and juice/coffee. We hope you will be able

to join us as we recognize this group. Please feel free to remain in your car or bring your camp chair and sit outside to enjoy the spring weather. If you have a High School senior in your home and have not received information about the recognition, please contact the church office.



Easter at Eastridge



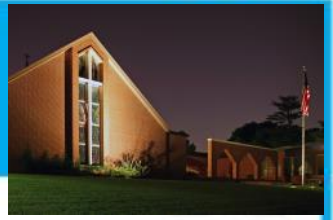
Here's What's Happening!

Work on phase one of the Sunrise Road property project continues to move forward. The work on the pantry building continues, extending the pantry by ten feet, and installing much needed plumbing for good health practices. Now that the weather is warmer, we are hopeful work on the ramp will begin soon, making the food pantry, playground, and community space accessible.

Another phase of the project, (formerly phase three) will be addressed sooner than planned. This phase addressed drainage issues on the north side of the building. Last fall some of our carpet tiles began "popping" up in the downstairs education wing. After researching the cause and possible solutions, the trustees determined that the current drainage solutions are no longer adequate for that portion of the building. Session approved the plans for the project, and agreed that it needs to be addressed soon. Plans call for the alley to be removed (it is not needed for fire codes) along the north side of the building, and for drain tiles to be installed. These tiles will direct water to a pump at the end of the building that will lead water away from the foundation. Originally, it was hoped we could leave drive up access to the alley door to the Huxtable Lounge. The drive up will now come to the end of the building, with a walkway to the alley door. We hope to do some landscaping and beautification where the alley is now, depending on developing a plan and funding.

Finally, the trustees will be coordinating some much needed work to the existing columns on the east and south side of the building. Work will also be done on the existing concrete on the south side of the building in order to address some drainage issues on that side of the building.





Join us for worship!

9 am - in person

This May, we will be worshipping in our sanctuary May 2, 23, and 30. We are still asking for reservations for worship to be made (see blurb at right) and limiting worshippers to 50. This worship service lasts about 30 minutes. Attendance for the four Sundays we have been in the sanctuary is around 40.

Join us in our east parking lot on Mother's Day, May 2, and Senior Graduation Sunday, May 16, with Covid safe celebrations following. There are no reservations for these Sundays, and no limit on attendance!

10 am - online on our Facebook, Youtube, and at (402) 372-5480

Worship



<https://rsvp.church/r/eCHViSzo>

Look for more opportunities to sign up for **IN-PERSON worship**. Click the link below to sign up for worship.

Help Needed! We are in need of EPC volunteers to deliver our Meals on Wheels route the 4th Monday of each month. Details about this important community outreach are included in the Meals On Wheels article in this newsletter. If you can fill this need, or want more information regarding it, please contact the church office as soon as possible.



We will be celebrating **Eastridge's birthday and Mother's Day in worship on May 9**. Join us for cookies and outdoor worship in the parking lot at 9:00 am! No need to make a reservation. Join us in the parking lot in your car (or bring a lawn chair to sit next to your car) at 9:00 am Sunday, May 9.



The **Gathering Place** will be opening again for meal distribution. If you are interested in volunteering, watch for more information sent via email (and here in the newsletter) soon.



Advocacy is one of the areas Eastridge has agreed to address as a Hunger Action Congregation. The Hunger Action Board would like to make you aware of LB108, currently under consideration before the Nebraska Legislature. It is called the SNAP Cliff Effect bill and will help families avoid needing to choose between accessing better job opportunities and keeping food on their tables when SNAP benefits might be decreased because the family has received greater income through a raise or change of jobs.

The bill is now on Select File. If you'd like to share your support for the bill, please call your senator's office or go to the Legislature's webpage, find LB108, and click "submit comment."



Session

for the project.

Highlights:

The Session and Board of Trustees met jointly to discuss the problem with water pooling in the basement of the church building. The Session approved a motion to accept the bid from Ayars and Ayars, Inc., to complete work to fix the problem. The bid is for approximately \$100,000. The Finance Committee and the Memorial and Endowment Committee will determine funding

The Reopening Committee is continuing to monitor the in-person worship services in the Sanctuary.

Rev. Thomas Dummermuth reported that all chapters of the Corona Bible have been adopted. The 9 a.m. worship will be in the parking lot on Mother's Day, May 9, 2021, and Graduate Recognition Sunday, May 16, 2021.

Dear Eastridge Presbyterian Women, staff, and congregation:

Thank you for the lovely prayer shawl Mary Lou knitted and the smooth cross Roger carved. They are very special. I can feel the love and support of my church family. Working hard to get strong so I can be among you all soon.

Yours in Christ, Elda Powley



Meals on Wheels: For many years the Eastridge Presbyterian Women (EPW) have coordinated participation in the delivery of Meals on Wheels on behalf of Eastridge Presbyterian Church. Most recently, Nan Nelson has served as the coordinator and contact person with Tabitha. At this point in time, the EPW is asking that Meals on Wheels become a ministry of the whole congregation, so coordination of Meals on Wheels for EPC will shift from EPW to the Hunger Action Board, with Jo Bateman being the contact person. Other than that, our church' participation remains the same, with EPC volunteers delivering meals every Monday.

We are currently in need of new volunteers to deliver our church's route on the 4th Monday of each month. The time commitment is from a Tabitha arrival time about 10:30 a.m.-10:45 and generally takes no more than 2 hours. It could be more or less, depending on the number of stops on the route, which varies as the clients needs change. Some volunteers are able to arrange to do this during their lunchtime. If you are interested in being a volunteer, or want more information please contact the church office. It is also helpful to have the names of those available to sub.

On behalf of the entire congregation, the Hunger Action Board wants to thank the EPW for their many years of leadership in this important ministry. Special thanks to Nan for her faithful leadership.





EASTRIDGE HOSPICE SINGERS UPDATE

The music ministry of our Eastridge Hospice Singers continues to provide the peace and comfort of music to those in hospice care through our virtual singing visits. In the spring of 2020, we had no idea how we would be able to still visit our friends in hospice. But God provided a way through staff members at residential facilities and hospice care homes who were willing to connect us virtually to our friends. Most of our visits took place using Skype, FaceTime and Duo. And a few friends we connected with through phone calls when internet access wasn't available.

Recently I was asked to provide a virtual program for a local community group about our ministry. As I prepared for this program I became curious as to how many people

we had sung for since our ministry began and the number of visits we had provided. From December 2018 to March 2020, our 30 trained hospice singers provided 111 weekly and monthly "in person" visits to 65 individuals. Since April 2020, during the pandemic, Dori Bush, Karen Shelton and myself have been blessed to provide 226 weekly virtual visits to 15 individuals along with 102 weekly phone calls to those without internet access. In total, from Dec 2018 through March 2021, God has blessed our ministry with the ability to provide 584 singing visits. Isn't that truly AMAZING? This certainly has proven to me, once again, that with God there is always a way!

We will continue to provide virtual visits for those requesting them and are looking forward to when we can again visit our friends in hospice with an "up close and personal" visit. To request and schedule a virtual or in person singing visit for a family member or a friend receiving hospice care, feel free to contact me at epc.hospice.singers@gmail.com or 402-432-8353 or the church office at 402-488-7844. You are also invited to pick up an Eastridge Hospice Singers brochure and business card at the Welcome Desk for yourself and/or to share with others.

Patty Niemann, Coordinator

Eastridge Hospice Singers

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION: We have scheduled two new member orientations. Both are on Sundays, and via zoom. Sign up to find out more about membership at Eastridge!

Sunday, May 2nd, 11:45-1pm OR Sunday, June 13th, 11:45-1pm

Sign up now for one of the available sessions here:

<http://bit.ly/discovereastridge>





Eastridge Presbyterian volunteers,
Happy Volunteer Week! Thank
you for being Gathering Place
volunteers in 2020! The
last year has been hard for
so many, and we appreciate that
you chose to still give your
time to help others. Thank you!
-Sam Bate

WITH GRATITUDE

Upcoming After Chat:

Sunday, May 2, **Dr. Bob Rauner:**

Prior to starting Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln, Dr. Rauner spent 15 years working as a family physician taking care of rural and underserved populations. He began working on community health issues after seeing the toll on health that obesity was taking on his patients. We are excited to chat with Dr. Rauner about the healing spirit.



Sunday, May 9, **Will McGuire and Jana McGuire:**

Will McGuire is currently on staff as our Worship Leader and A/V tech. Will and his mom, Jana, have played music together for longer than Will has been alive! Will and Jana will share about the loving spirit shared through the gift of music.



Sunday, May 16, **Rev. Anne Tolland:**

Rev Anne Tolland is pastor of St. John's Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church in Belfast, NI. She has strong ecumenical experience, and she has been very involved in developing close links with the Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches. Not only will Anne give us an update about what's happening with our friends across the pond, she will also give a powerful message about the spirit of reconciliation. She will share a message with both Eastridge and St. John's/Newtownbreda as we worship together.

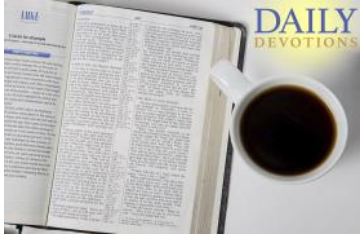




Bistro Theology
FAITH DRINKS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

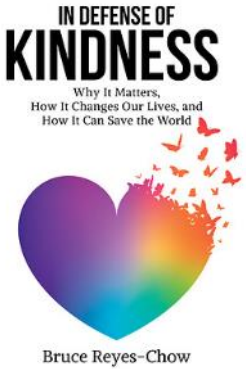
Join us April 29 at 7:00 pm for Bistro Theology at the home of Donna Gustafson (backyard). Contact the office or follow on Facebook for more info. May location TBD.

We are always looking for new writers for our online **devotion ministry**. If you are interested in writing, even just occasionally, please contact the office for more information. If you'd like to receive a prompt and the link five days a week via email, let the office know as well.



This summer, our community will be using Bruce Reyes-Chow's latest book, **"In Defense of Kindness: Why It Matters, How It Changes Our Lives, and How It Can Save the World."** Author Bruce Reyes-Chow will join us to kick off the study on Thursday, June 3, from 10-11 on Zoom; sessions will continue throughout the summer and vary in length. There are several ways to join!

- *On Zoom on Thursday mornings from 10-11, beginning June 3, 2021.
 - *On Facebook, in a closed private group - you will be able to participate in the most recent Zoom session by watching and commenting on the discussion. There will also be prompts posted here throughout the week and space to reflect on our practice of kindness in our lives.
 - *In person studies available upon interest.
 - *We are happy to provide information for ongoing groups.
- If you are interested in any of these options, please sign up in the church office.



Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon.....Senior Pastor
 Rev. Thomas Dummermuth.....Associate Pastor
 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
 Office number.....402-488-7844
 Melodie Jones Pointon: mjonespointon@eastridge.org
 Thomas Dummermuth: tdummermuth@eastridge.org

MEET THE STAFF

Flowers in Worship:

If you are interested in providing flowers for in-person worship in the sanctuary, you may sign up here:
<http://bit.ly/flowersworship>



Check out the screen in the Welcome Center for **"A Pandemic Year at Eastridge"** photo slideshow. If you have photos you'd like to share, send the file to the office.



Join the women of Eastridge for **Fourth Friday Coffee Fellowship**. Currently, we are meeting via Zoom at 8:30 am the fourth Friday of each month. Contact the office for more information!



EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



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