



EASTRIDGE

Presbyterian Church

Christ-Centered. Community Strong.
2021 Annual Report



Our mission statement:

*The God of Scripture
Calling Individuals
Into Community through Christ
Empowered by the Spirit
To Worship, Learn and Serve.*

Eastridge Church Staff

The Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon..... Senior Pastor
mjonespointon@eastridge.org

The Rev. Thomas Dummermuth.....Associate Pastor
tdummermuth@eastridge.org

Kris Adler-Brammer.....Director of Children and Youth Ministries
Donna Gustafson..... Office Manager
Andy Kalnins.....Night/Weekend Custodian
Dr. Brian Lew.....Director of Music Ministries
Will McGuire.....Worship Leader
Brent Shaw.....Organist
Vince Ruhl.....Director of Online Worship
Laura Siemsen.....Administrative Assistant
Brett Meier.....Audio Visual Tech

Eastridge Presbyterian Church
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Lincoln, Nebraska 68510-5014
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2021 Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda
January 30, 2022
3:30 pm via Zoom

Opening Prayer – The Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon

Approval of the Docket

Meeting of the Congregation – The Rev. Melodie Jones Pointon, Moderator

- Minutes of the 2021 Congregational Meetings
- Annual Report
- Necrology Report – The Rev. Thomas Dummermuth
- Motion to suspend the Congregational Meeting

Meeting of the Corporation - Susan Budler, 2021 President of the Corporation

- Opening Prayer
- Update on Projects Completed in 2021 - Susan Budler, 2021 President of the Corporation and Shirley Flynn-Bell, Treasurer
- Update on Projects Anticipated in 2022 - Shirley Flynn-Bell
- Questions, Answers, Suggestions, and Recommendations for the Trustees
- Closing Prayer

Reconvening of the Congregational Meeting

- Update on Completion of Phase One of Sunrise Road Property - George Kilpatrick, Chair
- Update on Phase Two of Sunrise Road Property – George Kilpatrick, Chair
- Report and Review of 2021 Financial Records—Shirley Flynn-Bell, Treasurer
- Presentation of the 2022 Budget – George Kilpatrick, Finance Chair
- Pastors' Compensation Packages – Kurt Beck, Personnel Chair
- Expression of Thanks
- Questions, Answers, Suggestions and Recommendations for the Session

Motion to Adjourn

Senior Pastor
Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon

Associate Pastor
Rev. Thomas Dummermuth



As the year 2020 ended, it seemed necessary to write a summary of the many historical events that happened and include it in the annual report. At the time, many were looking forward to 2021 with hope that things would improve. However, in the first few days of the new year, on January 6, 2021 (Epiphany in the church calendar), the world watched along with a stunned American population as citizens and members of radical political groups stormed our nation's capital. It was a shocking scene, broadcast live on tv, radio, and the internet. It was also a sure sign that 2021 would have its moments as well.

Many of those moments were positive and hopeful ones! As the vaccine for COVID-19 rolled out across the country, there was a feeling of relief and hope! At the invitation of the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department, many in our congregation went down to the mass vaccination clinics at the Pinnacle Arena. After registering, vaccination opened to groups by age, health risk, essential workers, and teachers. By late spring, vaccinations were available at most area pharmacies. Availability to younger age groups opened as the months rolled on: 12–17-year-olds in the spring and summer; 5-11-year-olds in the fall. By fall, boosters were being recommended. As church gatherings continued online, it was a joy to celebrate with each other as we became eligible for vaccination!

The church building remained closed through January and February. We opened our sanctuary for one in-person worship service at 9 am on March 14, 2021. These first worship services were 30 minutes long, with one pastor, one organist, a video Worship Connection, and no congregational singing. For contact tracing and physical distancing purposes, we asked for registrations. For the first time in our careers, we asked our musicians to play "unsingable" versions of comforting and familiar hymns! We did pray the Lord's Prayer together, another moment full of hope! As the spring rolled on, we added in more congregational participation. Services extended to 45 minutes, and we added in singing. We continued with some outdoor services as previously planned - Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Mother's Day, and Senior Recognition Sunday - so that all who wanted to attend in person could safely attend. We also worshipped in our parking lot on Good Friday with the congregations of Hickman and Fourth Presbyterian Churches. In person worship continued uninterrupted through the end of the year.

In-person meetings and gatherings resumed as participants were comfortable. The city/county mask mandate was allowed to expire in June and reinstated in August, and then allowed to expire one day before Christmas. With many meetings held outside, the Trustees asked for money from the general memorial fund to purchase tables and seating on the patio. Fall ministry programming began in September, taking advantage of the beautiful fall weather. As necessary, groups started and then paused when necessary and then resumed. When the weather turned colder, proper precautions were taken so groups could gather inside.

Another positive and hopeful moment happened when our community food pantry re-opened after a year of suspended distribution. With construction of the 10-foot extension, water access, and ramp completed, food distribution began slowly. Volunteers pre-packed boxes to be placed in the trunks of clients' cars. By the time we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the pantry in October with the dedication of the extension and ramp, there were two days for food distribution, and volunteers were being recruited to return to the client choice model.

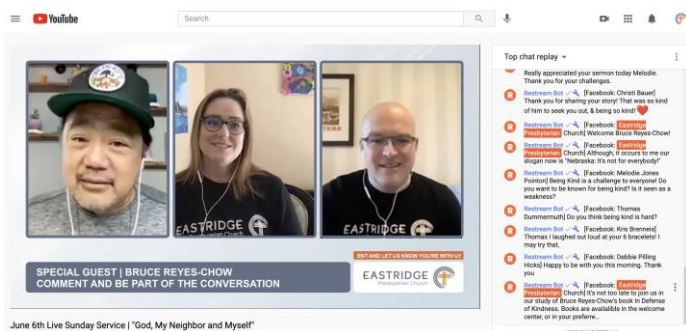
Our online worship and ministries continued to be the constant throughout the year. In January, our average online worship screens hovered around 100 ("they" say to count 2 to 2 1/2 people per screen). Roughly half the screens stayed connected for After Chats with guests covering subjects in lifestyle (outdoor cooking, gardening), spirituality, and Bible study. We welcomed preachers from around the world, including New York City, New York, Northern Ireland, London; worshipping with brothers and sisters around the world. We have maintained connections with a worshipping community that also spans the globe, including Northern Ireland, Switzerland, England, the Philippines, and South Sudan. We are delighted when we see familiar names in the chat from Texas, Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Florida, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Indiana. Our Maundy Thursday worship service was once again on zoom, and we shared in the Lord's Supper using the same loaf of bread, made by professional chefs and members of our community Wahadi and Katie Allen, delivered by our deacons, elders, and members. We continued to offer an online Bible Study nearly year-round, meeting in zoom and then uploading the video to a private Facebook group so that all could participate. We welcomed new members to our community who found us online, and then joined us in person. Our community thrived online!

From a pastoral care perspective, we became used to our N95 masks, worn in and out of hospitals, care facilities, and living communities as they opened to outside visitors. We continued to provide care over the phone, on zoom, and in person. We adapted as guidelines changed, were persistent when necessary, and (mostly Thomas) once again donned the clergy collar. Visits began through windows communicating on phones, almost always involved masks, and were often brief. Funerals were often outside or livestreamed from the sanctuary or funeral home. Funeral luncheons were rare and depended on local guidelines and restrictions. We rejoiced to baptize and welcome children once again!

Many congregations and communities saw divisions and discord, a reflection of the stressful, unusual, unprecedented times of politics and pandemic. It is amazing for us to reflect on the year and realize that our community continued to show respect and mutual forbearance throughout the year. We certainly did not always agree with each other! We DID, however, always respect the decisions made by the leadership of the boards and committees, treat each other with lovingkindness, and extend grace.

We know this is not the same pastor's report we have provided in the past! As we started to list the many things we've done, and the many things that we did not do, we were overwhelmed. It's been another year of many emotions, and we struggled to think about the year in terms of things quantifiable - ministries and programs, successes and failures. Instead, as we reflect together, we think about the many people connected with our community of faith and are grateful and amazed. As we remember the great moments of 2021, and the many ways we have been able to connect as a community, we are thankful for the love of God in Jesus Christ that continues to bring us together in relationship with each other. It is with this measure that we look forward to 2022!

Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon and Rev. Thomas Dummermuth



WORSHIP

WORSHIP COMMISSION

The Worship Commission is comprised of the senior pastor and elders who are responsible for three general areas of focus—worship and music, growth and hospitality, and fellowship. Several task forces function within these areas of focus. Participation in task forces is welcomed and encouraged! **(Note for 2021: some groups were virtual, some were in-person, some were a hybrid)**

Worship and Music Task Forces	GROW Task Forces	Fellowship Task Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult choirs (Chancel, Handbell)• Large musical works• Worship teams• Ushers• Sanctuary Technology• Choir fellowship• Children's music• Children's worship resources and connections• Communion• Hospice Singers• Worship and Music Advisory Committee• Visual displays• Wedding coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunday morning hospitality/greeters• Visitor follow-up• New member orientation• Neighborhood outreach (e.g. prayer walks, turquoise tables)• Online devotions• Prayer chain• Photo directory planning & volunteer help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wednesday worship• Holiday Gatherings• Ice cream Social• Ladies' Night Out• Fourth Friday Women's Coffee• Men's Tuesday Morning Coffee• Trailblazers• Book club• Parents of Youth• YANA (You Are Not Alone, a group for those who have lost a spouse)



LEARN

The Learn Commission is comprised of the Associate Pastor, Director of Children and Youth Ministries, and 3 elders: 1 each for Children, Youth, and Adult. This Commission is focused on the Christian Education and Faith Formation of all age groups. We welcome participation in our various task force areas.

Children (K-5th grade) task forces:

- *Faith Formation
Tuesday afternoons
- *Camp Calvin Crest- Summer Camp
- *Children's Christmas Program

Youth (6-12th grade) Task Forces:








- *Faith Formation
- *Youth Group
- *Confirmation
- *Retreats
- *Mission trips
- *Fundraising
- *Youth Sunday
- *Graduate Recognition

Adult Task Forces:

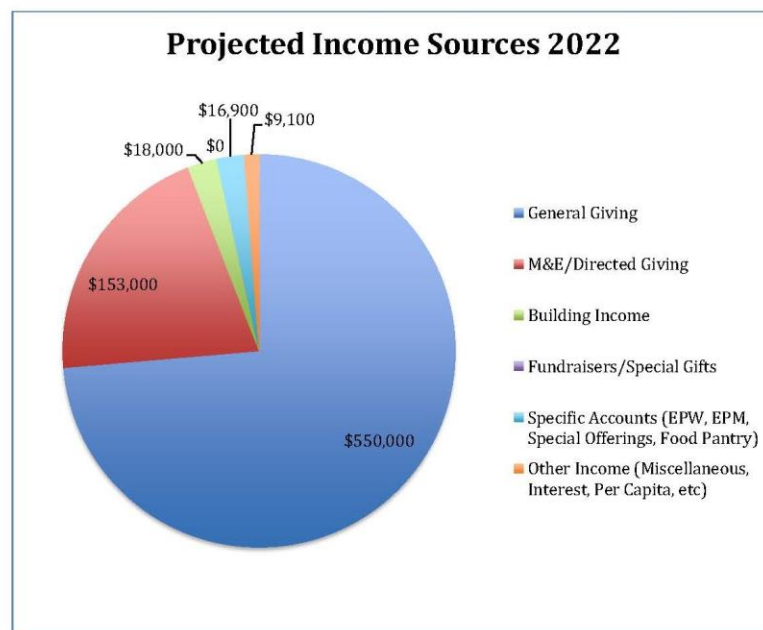
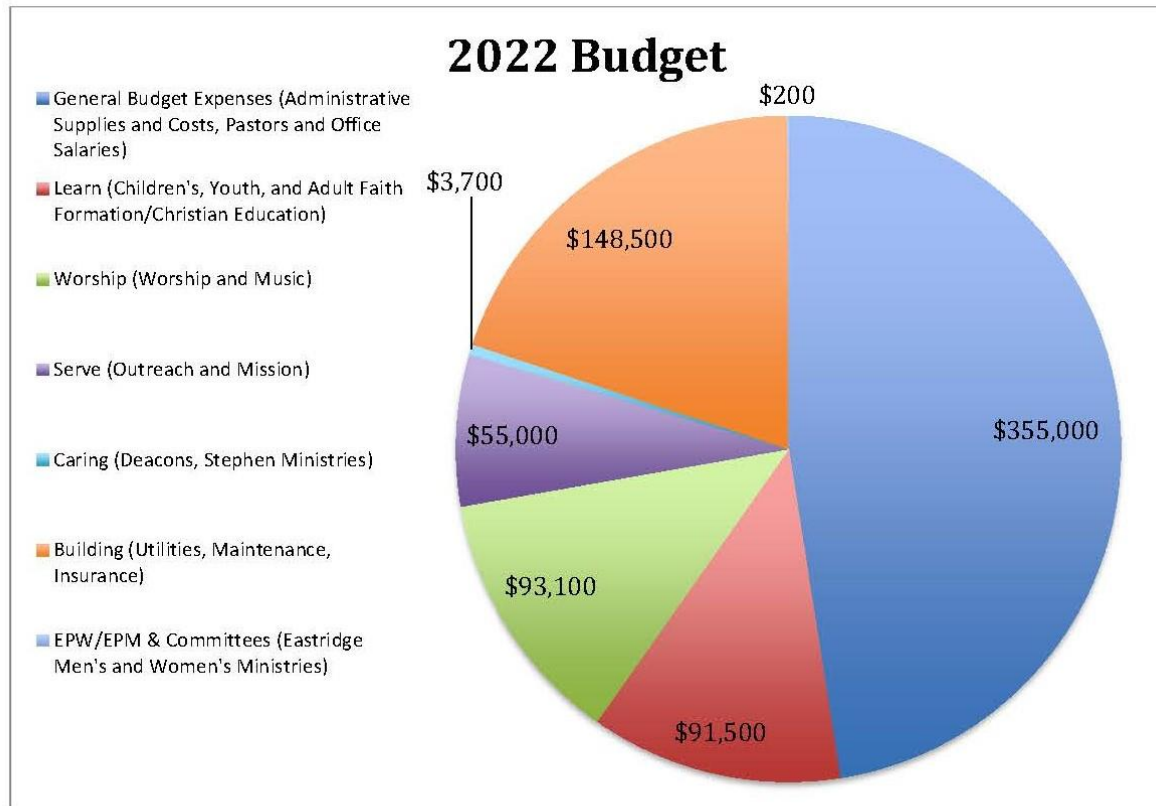
- *Bible Studies
- *Table Talks
- *Bistro Theology
- *Lent and Advent Studies
- *Book Club(s)
- *Men's Breakfast
- *Retreats
- *Circles

SERVE

The Serve Commission is comprised of the ruling elders responsible for stewardship, outreach, and nominating, along with the moderator(s) of the Board of Deacons. The task of this commission is to provide leadership for areas of service to the church, our local community and the greater community. Our intent is to live as Christ would have us live, serving as the hands and feet of God. Several task forces function in each area of focus. Each task force is responsible for the work of their group and are accountable to the Serve Commission to report about their work and to request funds, if needed. Many groups are open to anyone interested in that ministry of the church.

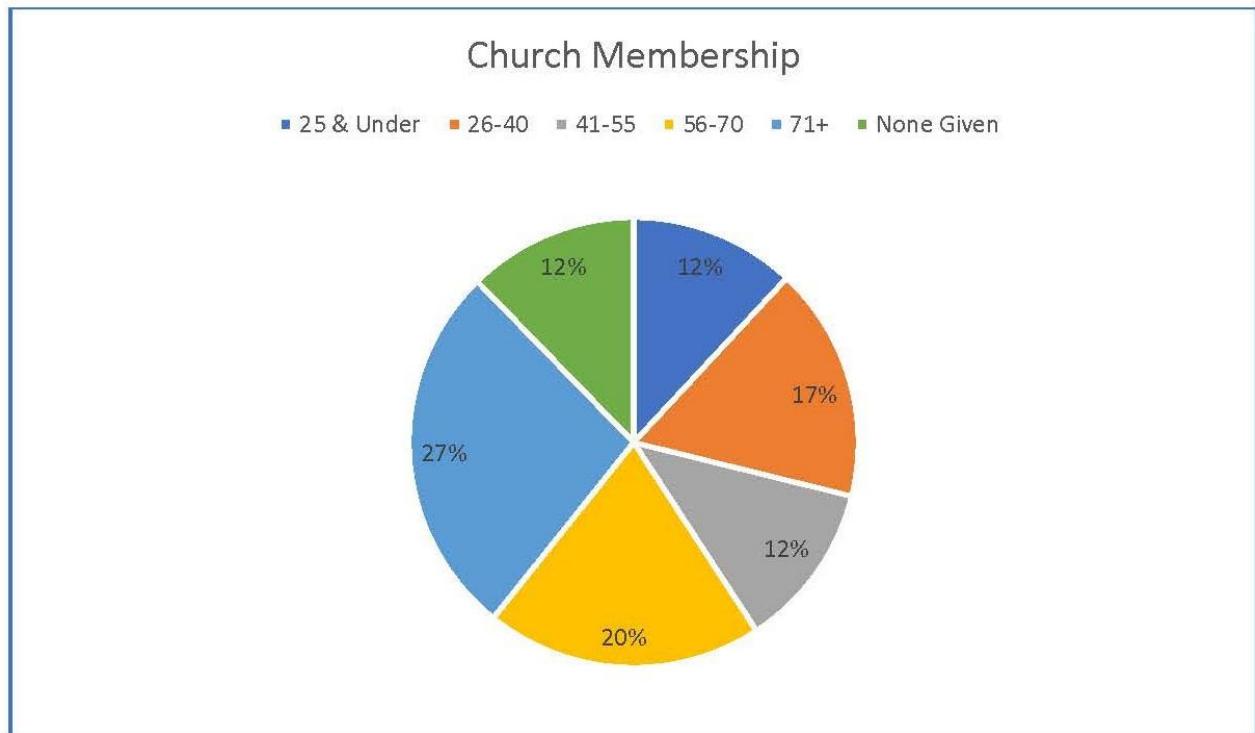
NOMINATING	OUTREACH	DEACONS
<p>Nominating Committee Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robin Hadfield, Chair Mary Amen Cheryl Byler Shirlette Hershiser Sandra Hilsabeck-Hastings Gary Kilian Marge Riemann Susan Taylor Lisa Woito-Petty <p>Incoming Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Kilpatrick Alinda Stelk Gary Kilian Lois Wies Elizabeth Kohel Deacons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seth Crawford LaDonna Grubbs Donna Gies Ivy Hanson Gina Kohel Shellie Ottis Hope Shortridge Trustees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan Budler Nancy Hall Kevin James Memorial and Endowments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deryl Merritt Darrell Nelson Nominating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandy Hilsabeck-Hastings Susan Taylor Seth Crawford 	<p>OUTREACH COMMITTEE TASKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a budget for use of the funds budgeted for Outreach Approve quarterly dispersals to PCUSA and local missions (direct services) Approve Emerging Needs requests as necessary Publicize and receive 4 PCUSA special offerings and Christmas Eve offering. Communicate with PCUSA missions we support <p>OUTREACH TASK FORCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Racism Taskforce Little Free Library Gathering Place Angel Tree Crop Walk Eastridge Food Pantry Pantry Volunteers Lefler Food Pantry Partnership Bread Ministry Sunrise Property Committee Eastridge Faith Partners <p><u>Potential Outreach Task forces</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCUSA World Mission Partnership Interfaith Peacemaking Conference Neighborhood Partnership and Development Support for Maker Village Veda's School in Pakistan Other Local Agencies 	<p>DEACON MINISTRIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Visitation & Communion Communication with Members Tending the needs of the sick, the Eastridge Neighborhood, those grieving, new parents and young families Welcoming members, and visitors Mentoring new members Transportation <p>DEACON TASK FORCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Holiday Flowers Advent & Lent postcards Meals at home Funeral meals—preparation and serving Coffee service—prepare, serve and clean-up coffee and food, when provided Eastridge Caring emails Prayer Shawls      

2022 Budget and Stewardship Information



*Fundraiser and Special Gifts projection unknown at this time, as plans for special events are finalized and discussed.

Church Membership



Age Distribution of Active Members

25 and Under	70	Ages 56-70	117
Ages 26-40	99	Over 71	158
Ages 41-55	70	None Given	72
Presbytery members	4		



Eastridge Session 2022

Kurt Beck

(Personnel Committee)

William Wehrbein

(Serve Commission)

Lois Wies

(Personnel Committee)

Doug McDaniel

(Stewardship)

Gary Kilian

(Nominating Committee)

Robin Hadfield

(Clerk)

Chris Boden

(Learn Commission/Children's Faith Formation)

George Kilpatrick

(Finance Committee)

Alinda Stelk

(Learn Commission/Youth Faith Formation)

Kris Brenneis

(Worship Commission/Worship)

Carolyn Olsen

(Learn Commission/Adult Education)

Carol Ripley

(Worship Commission/GROW)

Elizabeth Kohel

(Learn Commission/Children)

Greg Tubach

(Worship Commission/Fellowship)

***Melodie Jones Pointon**

(Moderator, Senior Pastor)

Thomas Dummermuth

(Associate Pastor)

Memorial and Endowment 2022

Beth Birnstihl

Paul Harmon

Deryl Merritt

Darrell Nelson

Leo Schumacher

***Robbie Shortridge**

Eastridge Deacons 2022

Wahadi Allen

Mary Amen

Charles Bachinski

Carolyn Brandle

Seth Crawford

Cathy Duling

Jean Dunbar

Donna Gies

Jim Gies

Sharon Gollehon

LaDonna Grubbs

Ivy Hanson

Sharon Irvin

Judith Keller

Gina Kohel

Emma Newcomb

Garin Newcomb

Shellie Ottis

William (Bill) Short

Hope Shortridge

Becky Shupe

Berna Stading

Eastridge Trustees 2022

***Susan Budler**

***Shirley Flynn-Bell**

Nancy Hall

Kevin James

Mike Laughter

Rex Radcliff

John Rouse

Ray Schapmann

Lisa Woito-Petty

*Denotes Moderator and/or
Co-Moderators

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

These studies were offered/completed by groups in 2021:

Because of Bethlehem by Max Lucado

Discovering Our Spiritual Identity by Trevor Hudson

From Daughters to Disciples by Lynn Japinga

He Chose The Nails by Max Lucado

Holy Friends (based on the book *Holy Envy*, by Barbara Brown Taylor)

In Defense of Kindness by Bruce Reyes Chow

The Gospel of Mark

Lies My Preacher Told Me by Brent Strawn

Philippians: Six Themes Everyone Should Know by Cynthia Campbell

Saints and Scoundrels in the Story of Jesus by Nancy Guthrie

Seamless: Understanding the Bible in One Complete Story by Angie Smith

What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus by Merryl Blair

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I began the Annual Report for 2020 by exclaiming, "What a year!" I can only echo that sentiment once again, as the world around us remained unpredictable, but the staff and volunteers at Eastridge remained constant in their dedication and efforts to provide fellowship, guidance, and caring to our youth.

Throughout the pandemic, Kris Adler-Brammer, Director of Christian Education, has worked to find ways to connect with our kids. With Valentine deliveries in February, T-Shirts in March, May Day surprises, Graduation Sunday services, individualized birthday cards and yard signs, care packages for our college kids this fall, worship boxes and activity kits for our younger kids each week, and more – Kris has worked to ensure that our kids were receiving regular contact from Eastridge even in months when the pandemic kept us physically apart.

In September, we were able to gather again, and our Youth Group began meeting in person on Wednesday nights. Each week staff and volunteers provide dinner to our kids, followed by activities and opportunities for learning and discussion. It is our hope that 2022 will again present opportunities for our youth to attend Triennium or other mission activities, and this fall's Elf Yourself fundraiser and 10,000 Villages Christmas Market helped to raise funds so that our youth can participate.

Our younger Eastridge members began meeting again this fall as well. The Tuesday after-school program started up once again with snacks prepared each week by three volunteers from the Presbyterian Women's group. The program follows the Holy Moly curriculum, which has been a hit. In the fall, our kids began preparing for the Christmas program, giving them the opportunity to be a part of our Christmas Eve services in December.

We have about 23 children and youth regularly participating in our ministry programs, and we are so grateful to the volunteers that come forward to teach, serve, feed, package, mail, deliver, pray for, and support in so many other ways the programs for our children and youth. A huge thank you to each of you for making a difference in our church community.

If you are interested in joining us in our mission, please join us! There are many ways to get involved - either behind the scenes or before the group, on a regular basis or every now and again – we'd love to have you. It's a lot of fun and a great way to connect with the youngest members of our church community. We can learn so much from each other. Come join us!

Lois Wies, LEARN Commission, Youth Chair

EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (EPW)

EPW is an organization available to all women of our congregation who have indicated their willingness to be involved in the program. Together, we nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, support the mission of the Church worldwide and build an inclusive caring community of women thereby strengthening the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

The organization is composed of four circles which meet on the first Wednesday of the month, September through May. September to January circle meetings were in person. January to May circle meetings were held via Zoom. Nearly 40 women participate in these circles, coming together to read and study the Bible using a Horizon lesson plan. This year, we are studying *What My Grandmothers Taught Me*. Women are also invited to read from the reading list for Presbyterian Women of Homestead Presbytery.

In addition, the organization brings all members together four times a year for a luncheon and gathering. These months are September, October, April and May. A luncheon speaker guides our thoughts to needs and missions in the community of Lincoln. The gathering in September: Marcee Metzger, executive director of Voices of Hope was the speaker. The gathering in October: Donna Gustafson presented "*Exploring Nature with Photography*".

Susan Taylor, Moderator & Pat Grieser, Vice Moderator, EPW

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The mission of the Finance Committee is to affirm the vision of Eastridge Presbyterian Church by providing oversight over monetary resources that enable the church to create a community for individuals to worship, learn and serve. The committee works to find a way to finance the budget requests of the various church committees and presents a unified annual church budget to the Session for approval. The process includes review of previous years' giving and expenditures compared to budgeted amounts and anticipating funding needs for the upcoming year. For 2022, the Committee, like the rest of the church faced continuing unpredictability brought on by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee looked at the 2021 actual expenditures to determine the 2022 budget, as opposed to the previous practice of adjusting the prior year budget as needed. Of course, many expenses are fixed and remained the same in 2021 even though the church building was unused for much of the year. At the same time, some expenses continue to increase. Areas of increase for 2022 include utilities, payroll, and the maintenance and repair of our aging church building.

While the Finance Committee has not yet completed its budget recommendation for 2022, it expects to forward a budget to the Session for approval that maintains our programming. The budget recommendation will provide a 2% increase in pay for our hard-working staff and increase funding for utilities and maintenance for the building. We believe the membership of the church has been grateful for what our staff has been able to provide and has been generous in their giving. For 2021, contributions were nearly the same as they were in the non-COVID-19 year 2019 and higher than 2020. Nevertheless, the committee expects greater reliance on discretionary Memorial and Endowment funds to support the mission and priorities of the church, unless the general fund giving can keep pace with inflation.

The Chair of the Finance Committee is a member of the Session and a liaison to the Board of Trustees and Memorial and Endowments Committees. Members in 2021 were: Steve Anderson, Lynne Smejdir, Shirley Flynn, Cameron Meter, Darrell Nelson, and George Kilpatrick, chair.

George Kilpatrick, Finance chair

FOOD PANTRY

In 2021, the Eastridge Food Pantry served a total of 3,025 people between July-December 2021. After the Pantry remodel was completed mid-summer, volunteers worked throughout the remaining summer months to get the pantry ready to reopen.

- Old shelving was replaced with more sturdy and versatile shelving, which increased the amount of shelf space for inventory and pantry supplies.
- Grant money was used to restock the shelves and purchase distribution and cleaning supplies.
- The Pantry Committee met multiple times to discuss how to safely reopen the pantry during the ongoing COVID Pandemic.

The decision was made to re-open the pantry starting with only drive thru box pick-up distribution one day per week. Once the number of clients increased we added one more distribution day per week. Once these numbers increased, the ramp was completed, and handicapped entry was secured into the pantry, we added in-person shopping along with drive thru service two days per week. This hybrid model of distribution has allowed us to serve more clients while maintaining a smaller number of people inside the pantry at one time.

We were able to partner with Southwood Lutheran Church to create a method for clients to sign up for a shopping time. We currently allow 3 shoppers inside the pantry in 15-minute time slots. A dedicated line was added for a pantry voicemail, where clients leave a message to request a shopping appointment. Volunteers from Southwood return the calls and sign-up shoppers for their reserved shopping times. So far, this has been working very well.

The number of clients served since the reopening of the pantry is broken down below:

July (2 weeks): 98

August: 325

September: 344

October: 498

November: 781

December: 979

In October we officially celebrated the re-opening of the Pantry during our 50-year Anniversary Celebration. We gathered on the slab outside of the pantry for a light breakfast, music and pantry tours.

The financial condition of the Eastridge Food Pantry remains excellent. Although contributions to the pantry were down as a result of the Covid pandemic and the pantry construction closure, expenses were essentially zero during that period of closure. While much of the food and personal care items that were in the Pantry at the time of the pandemic closure were distributed to clientele and other food relief organizations in the city to allow construction, the Pantry managed to obtain two grants (one from the Presbytery Foundation and the other from federal CARES) for \$20,590. These funds were spent mostly to restock the Pantry with food and personal care items for our clientele with a modest amount spent to upgrade Pantry facilities (better shelving, cleaning supplies, etc.). Contributions of food items and money from the Eastridge congregation and our partner churches began to flow again when the Pantry re-opened. We continue to collect food donations in the shopping cart in the Welcome Center. Monetary donations are also accepted. Remember to indicate on your check or envelope that it's for the "Eastridge Food Pantry".

Currently, Tami Rembolt is serving as the Director of the Pantry. The Pantry committee members are Steve Taylor, Hope Shortridge, Kris Brenneis and Cheryl Ferree. If you are interested in volunteering for the pantry, please reach out to a committee member, or email us at epchungeraction@gmail.com.

Tami Rembolt, Food Pantry Director

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Health and Safety Committee was formed by the session in August 2021 to continue to oversee the proper health and safety measures of our staff, the congregation, and visitors and of course our property. The committee was initially formed as an ad hoc committee known as the Reopening Committee, which was started in late 2020. At that time, we really felt that our work would be short lived and truly temporary!

Our intent then and now is to find proper ways to safely maintain our ability to gather, study, grieve, celebrate and worship together in an environment that is constantly evolving! Those who serve on the committee are acutely aware of the social sensitivities that have surrounded this pandemic, but our intentions have always been to care for our staff and congregation, taking into consideration what the medical profession and community health leaders were sharing with us.

I know that there have been some instances where our decisions were not popular and may have disappointed people. But the committee is cohesive, and we have a firm resolve to continue to make decisions that are in the best interest of all.

The committee recognizes the continued efforts and creativity of our staff that have found unique and safe ways for us to be together in God's name; the examples range from complex online worship, zoom Bible studies, zoom session and committee meetings, parking lot worship, virtual choirs and parking lot concerts, piano duets, porch pictures, traveling peace candles, Maundy Thursday communion sacks, self-directed worship services, parking lot movies and caroling, and Elfing! The list goes on and on so please forgive me if I missed some of the other unique experiences!

I have to say that as a congregation, we have been truly blessed throughout this pandemic experience! That is something I thought I would NEVER say! But truly friends, look at all the new experiences we have had before us! And, we have done these safely and faithfully!

So "Thank You" for being patient with us as we navigate the unknown. My colleagues on this committee are Kris Brenneis, Chris Boden, Gina Kohel, Diane Eaton, and Susan Budler. They have served with me throughout this situation and have done so professionally, prayerfully and with compassion!

Doug McDaniel, Committee Chair

HUNGER ACTION BOARD

The Hunger Action Board (HAB) continued its work overseeing all hunger-related ministries of the church. The HAB has responsibility for Meals on Wheels, the Bread Ministry, the Crop Walk, the Gathering Place, the Lefler Market, and Bread for the World. The HAB also is designed to address hunger-related issues that relate to systemic poverty and the Matthew 25 initiative.

Several programs were impacted by the continuing pandemic. The Gathering Place altered its programming to distributing prepared meals, and Eastridge volunteers assist two days each month. A group of Eastridge members participated in the Crop Walk, which raised \$675. The Eastridge Pantry received \$247.74 of the Crop Walk proceeds. The Lefler Food Market suspended operations during the spring semester, but returned to distribution in the fall. Eastridge has 11 volunteers who work in the market.

The HAB organized the celebration in October of the 50th Anniversary of the Eastridge Pantry and the completion of the expansion of the pantry building. (Special thanks to Jo Bateman for her work on the celebration, and to the volunteers who helped serve refreshments or took part in the dedication during the worship service.) The building project also included completion of a handicap accessible ramp to the pantry building and the playground. October also

marked the second anniversary of Eastridge's commitment as a Covenanting Hunger Action Congregation within the Presbyterian Church (USA). This commitment ensures that Eastridge will acknowledge and celebrate the faithful work of Presbyterians around the country to alleviate hunger and end its causes.

We thank Eastridge members for their strong support of hunger-related issues. Anyone who would like to be more active in these issues is welcome to join the HAB.

Hunger Action Board Members

Robin Hadfield, Chair; Jo Bateman; Susan Budler; Hope Shortridge; Berna Stading; Rev. Thomas Dummermuth, Staff

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The second year of the pandemic continued to impact the work of the Nominating Committee. We continued to meet by Zoom. During this time of livestream worship and limited in-person activities, we were also faced with the added hurdle of not being able to talk to people in person to ask them to serve on a board or committee, including the Session, Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons, Memorial and Endowment Committee, and Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee appreciates those who stepped forward and agreed to serve. We ask that all members prayerfully consider how they can serve the church in 2022 and beyond.

Session Class of 2024:

George Kilpatrick—Finance

Alinda Stelk—Youth

Gary Kilian—Nominating

Lois Wies—Personnel

Class of 2022:

Elizabeth Kohel—Youth Elder

Trustees Class of 2024:

Susan Budler

Nancy Hall

Kevin James

Deacons Class of 2024:

Seth Crawford

LaDonna Grubbs

Ivy Hansen

Gina Kohel

Shelley Ottis

Class of 2022:

Hope Shortridge—Youth Deacon

Robin Hadfield, Nominating chair

Memorial and Endowment Committee Class of 2024:

Deryl Merritt

Darrell Nelson

Nominating Committee Class of 2023:

Sandy Hilsabeck Hastings

Susan Taylor

Seth Crawford

Robin Hadfield (2022)

Nominating Committee:

Robin Hadfield, Chair

Mary Amen

Cheryl Byler

Shirlette Hershiser

Sandy Hilsabeck Hastings

Gary Kilian

Marge Riemann

Susan Taylor

Lisa Woito Petty

OUTREACH

In 2021 the Outreach Committee was guided by the Matthew 25 Invitation, a movement that calls Presbyterian congregations to actively engage in the world around us, so that our faith comes alive and we awake to new possibilities. Of the three goals: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty, we chose to focus on the second. The work of the Antiracism Task force was folded into the Outreach Committee, and suggestions for study and reflection were offered each week in The Lamp. The Committee has distributed a number of yard signs that are displayed around the church and in the yards of EPC members encouraging faith, love, support, and hope. In addition, Outreach supported the “#EPCKINDNESS” initiative, and information was provided in The Lamp and newsletters urging readers to write their representatives in Congress about hunger and nutrition issues.

Over the year the Outreach Committee distributed \$40,000 to Presbyterian missions (including Camp Calvin Crest, missionaries in South Sudan, theological education, and Behane Yesus School in Ethiopia), local agencies (The Gathering Place, Tabitha Meals on Wheels, Lefler Middle School Mobile Pantry, The Lighthouse, Fresh Start, and Habitat for Humanity) meeting the needs of our neighbors in Lincoln, and two agencies addressing the needs of victims of the earthquake in Haiti and Hurricane Ida in Louisiana.

Bill Wehrbein (chair), Jo Bateman, Chris Boone, Thomas Dummermuth, Carol McClain, Mickey McDaniel, and Berna Stading

William Wehrbein, Outreach chair

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

We as a congregation at Eastridge have had to make many changes in our daily lives and those changes continue to affect the way we worship. The staff we have at Eastridge have been able to step up to help us with changes at church as we continue to navigate these uncertain times. Each staff member not only does the tasks described in their job descriptions they are also willing to adjust schedules, multitask and be creative to make our church a comfortable place to come. The personnel committee has stayed in contact through email, meeting in person as well as virtually. With some of the unusual instances that we have all encountered we have had to adjust some of the policies mostly around vacations and continuing education. As a committee we always strive to encourage our staff to better themselves.

We as a congregation should reach out to every staff member to thank them for the ministry that they are providing us at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

Kurt Beck, Personnel chair

STEPHEN MINISTRY – COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Thanks and gratitude go to Eastridge Presbyterian Church for the continued support and mentoring of Stephen Ministry.

Continuing in 2021, as the Covid-19 pandemic was still upon us, Stephen Ministers had to find other ways to continue caring visits. The Stephen group resorted to phone calls, texting, letters and cards, and other means to stay in touch with our care receivers. As we had to abandon our onsite meetings, we have adapted the Zoom approach.

Following is the list of current Stephen Ministers: Berna Stading, Bob Mitchell, Carol Ripley, Cathy Duling, Jane DeKalb, John Duling, Phyllis Hyde, Susan Taylor, Shirley Flynn-Bell.

During these difficult times, we want to thank the Pastoral staff, Eastridge Presbyterian Church, and the congregation for continuing to support confidential ministry by referring those who are hurting due to death, illness, job loss or other life situations which are difficult to manage by self. Referrals can be made to either one of the Pastors or Susan Taylor. You, Eastridge members, continue to be our ears and eyes in being able to deliver this caring ministry.

It is with very Blessed hearts, we look forward to the year 2021, and the blessings, guidance, and grace from our Lord. This ministry is funded from the interest income of the generous endowment given by Olivia Lincoln and/or other monies designated by Session.

This report is dedicated to the Eastridge Presbyterian Church Stephen Ministry, and Stephen Ministers.

Shirley Flynn-Bell, Stephen Minister

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In addition to the regular daily maintenance needed to run the church, 2021 was a very busy year for the Eastridge Presbyterian Church Trustees.

-In April we did a church cleanup with 10 volunteers along with the Eastridge Neighborhood Association annual cleanup. We pruned some of the smaller trees and raked leaves out of the shrub and perennial beds. We installed new handicap and parking signs and we also cleaned the Welcome Center windows. We were able to mulch all the beds later in the summer.

-During the year the gutters on the west side of the Welcome Center were patched and the gutters on the east side of the church were repaired by a roofing company.

- During this past year the flat roof was inspected by the roofing company, as we had seen water on the brick wall in the Welcome Center, and on the ceiling. The issues found were repaired.

-The pews that were cracking in the sanctuary were repaired under warranty.

-With the help of the EPC office we have put together an inventory of most of the church equipment and when it was installed. We did need to replace one of the outdoor AC units that services Huxtable Lounge.

Summer/Fall 2021 EPC Projects

-The North Foundation project which hopefully solved our water issues on the north side of the building was completed in late fall. A sump pump was installed and new window well covers were installed as part of the project.



-On the southwest corner of the East Patio, we were having water issues in the basement. It was decided to remove one of the brick flower planters, and to pour new concrete sloping away from the building. While we were working on the patio, we decided to purchase outdoor tables and umbrellas, as we hope more people will utilize this area for outdoor meetings and gatherings.

-South Foundation repair where we have had water issues in the basement in the Fellowship Hall was repaired this fall.

So far, all these repair projects, dealing with the water issues in the building, have been working and we have not had any water in the basement since their completions.



Over the last few years, the North Narthex doors had been deteriorating, since both the north and south doors and frames were 50+ years old it was decided to replace both sets at the same time and have them match.

New sign inserts were installed in the 56th Street Sign. They are individual panels with the church, day care, and pantry graphics. The lights were switched to LED for better efficiency. The sign was painted to match the trim color of the church.



- In the summer and fall of 2021, one of our current Trustees, Rex Radcliff started to scrape and paint the trim and railings all around the church. When completed, the trim will be all one color.

-Repainting and installing new caps on the columns on the east and south side of the church. We hope this work will keep the columns from deteriorating so they can be enjoyed for many more years.

-In September 2021 we had 3 larger trees on the church grounds pruned.

We sealed the new concrete in the Pantry expansion.

The EPC Trustees hope to continue to have our church be a safe and beautiful place for our members, and visitors to work, meet, and gather at, and again we would like to thank the congregation for their patience and support while all these projects were going on this past year.

Susan Budler, Trustee chair

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Flexibility was the theme for Worship and Music at EPC in 2021. We began the year with an online service at 10 a.m., followed by a discussion topic, usually with guests and questions from the online audience. We continued with this popular and unique (among online churches) model until we reopened in-person church, on a limited basis, March 14. Reservations were required, pews were roped off to help with spacing, and other recommended precautions were taken. Given the limited nature of the service and 9:00 start, we were still able to do a 10:00 online service as well. We conducted parking lot worship for Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Mother's Day/EPC Birthday, and May 16 for Graduating Seniors. Starting in June, we added more elements to the in-person worship service and thus changed the time for the online service to 10:30. The 9:00 service incorporates a variety of worship and music styles, with the choir, bells, piano, organ, guitar, and drums all making appearances on a regular basis. Masks were, are, and continue to be required in the building.

Communion was served on the first Sunday of each month. During online services, members were encouraged to use whatever bread and drink that was common to their home table. As discussed below, we had a special communion via zoom on Maundy Thursday. During in-person church, members picked up their own prepackaged wafer/grape juice combo from an usher before entering the sanctuary. We will continue to use the prepackaged communion option for the foreseeable future given the state of the pandemic.

For Lent, we held a virtual Ash Wednesday service and had ashes available in the welcome center for those wanting to come and have ashes applied. Thomas hosted a "Virtual Lenten Monastery" nightly, via zoom, for the week of February 27 – March 6. Each week thereafter, a Lenten zoom service was held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30.

For Holy week, the committee helped stuff envelopes for a Palm Sunday mailing to members, complete with Palm fronds and other Palm Sunday related materials. On Maundy Thursday, we held a zoom service, and bread that had

been prepared by members Wahadi & Katie Allen was delivered to as many members as possible so that we could collectively share the same bread for communion. We also held a traditional Easter service online at 10 a.m. On November 7, we held a communion service of special thanks for saints who went home to be with the Lord in the last year. On November 14, we gathered in the parking lot, shared pumpkin dessert and hot beverages, and met for our annual congregational nominating meeting.

Current and former members of the committee and other kind souls helped to decorate the church for Christmas. Poinsettias were purchased and distributed around the welcome center and sanctuary. After Christmas, the Poinsettias were either taken home by the purchaser or delivered to shut ins.

Pastor Thomas held another Virtual Advent Monastery nightly from November 25 through December 1. Pastors Melodie and Thomas set up advent stations on Wednesdays during Advent for congregants to peruse, contemplate and complete activities, from 10 a.m. through 7 p.m. Brent Shaw arranged for music over the noon hour during these Wednesday Advent worship stations.

December 5, we held an afternoon parking lot event with hymn singing, a reading of the Polar Express, and cookies and hot cider. December 12, during worship, the chancel choir, Kirk Ringers, and the McGuires all participated in the Christmas Cantata, a Festival of Lessons and Carols. Members were encouraged to bring canned goods for the pantry in celebration of the return of the CANTata.

On Christmas Eve, we returned to three in-person services and all three services were live-streamed. The traditional children's service was at 5 pm, complete with a telling of the Christmas story and virtual children's choir recordings coordinated by Kris Adler-Brammer and Brian Lew. The 7 pm service featured the contemporary music of Will, Madeline and Jana McGuire. The 9 o'clock service featured performances by the Kirk Ringers, Chancel Choir, and trumpets. For each service, we used LED lights for the traditional singing of Silent Night in lieu of actual candles, as blowing out the candles would have been impossible with masks, and dangerous without masks. Luminaria adorned the west and south sidewalks.

The Chancel Choir began 2021 with several virtual choir performances. An incredible performance of the Hallelujah Chorus for Easter Sunday deserves special mention. As many as 45 singers throughout the Homestead Presbytery combined with the Chancel Choir in singing our traditional "come join us" anthem to end the Easter service. The final product, a result of hundreds of hours of editing and uploading by Brian, still elicits goosebumps when remembering it. The choir was happily able to transition to in-person rehearsals and singing as the year went on and provided special music several times per month in the latter half of 2021.

The Kirk Ringers were also able to transition back to a larger ensemble rather than two small groups as the year progressed. Returning to our standard size has allowed the group to learn more challenging music. The Kirk Ringers were the first ensemble group to be able to return to provide live music for in-person church, and it did so several times from mid-summer through the end of the year.

The choral scholar program, which provides stipends for a small group of university musicians singing in worship, is supported through donations by individuals committed to continuing this important aspect of our music ministry. Funds for this important part of our ministry were nearly depleted, and so in October and November the committee held a fundraiser for the choral scholar program. We sold calendars featuring photos of birds, taken by Donna Gustafson. Thanks to Donna's beautiful photos and generous spirit, we raised \$1800 for the choral scholar program. We will continue to fundraise to maintain this vital portion of our choral music ministry.

The Eastridge Hospice Singers continued their ministry led by Patty Niemann, provide a cappella singing visits on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis for individuals receiving hospice care services. (*See report below*).

Eastridge has an exceptional group of staff members and volunteers. Brian Lew is the Music Director. He directs the Chancel Choir, Kirk Ringers, and special instrumental groups, in addition to creative and administrative coordination of a wide range music-related tasks: hiring guest musicians; taking care of equipment and instruments; picking out music to complement the sermon theme; and during virtual choir, acted as a delivery person, video editor, sound mixer/fixer, and occasionally, a cheerleader and therapist for the discouraged vocalist. Brian is gifted in his musical skills, but he is also an empathetic and engaging leader. His care and concern for each of the members in these ensembles is perhaps his greatest asset. We are blessed to have Brian as our Director of Music.

Our Director of Ministries for Children and Youth, Kris Adler-Brammer, facilitates opportunities and experiences for young people in worship, including youth Sunday, which was virtual and completely led by the youth in February 2021. Kris also tapes a very popular "worship connection" segment that is shown as a video during both in-person and virtual church. Kris continued to provide worship kits before we returned to in-person gatherings. In the fall, Kris facilitated a return to worship learning with faith formation experiences for children on Tuesdays after school, and youth group on Wednesday evenings. We are blessed to have Kris as our Director of Ministries for Children and Youth.

Brent Shaw is our organist and choir accompanist. He continues to move and inspire us with beautiful, worshipful music. Brent has collaborated on many duets and special musical offerings with Brian and other musicians. We are thankful that Will McGuire, often accompanied by Madeline and Jana McGuire continues to share his gifts singing contemporary worship songs during in-person and online worship. Guest instrumentalists, pianists, and choral scholars have enriched worship in many ways over the course of the year. Sound technicians Vince Ruhl, Will McGuire and Brett Meier have provided outstanding A/V work for our online services and in-person services, which are spaced a half hour apart. Office manager Donna Gustafson plays an indispensable role in handling countless details of the worship and music programs through her work. We are blessed to have Brent, Will, Vince, Brett and Donna as part of our staff.

Pastors Melodie Jones Pointon and Thomas Dummermuth set the tone for the staff with outstanding leadership, a willingness to think outside the box, and always, a contingency plan. As with last year, the pastors worked many more hours with less time off than in a normal year, all to keep the EPC not only afloat, but thriving. They have made this abnormal time not only palatable but have facilitated a welcome reimagining of the way we worship, meet in committees and groups, and connect with one another as members of EPC. We have experimented with interactive sessions on Facebook, held hybrid zoom/in-person meetings, and they led numerous and interesting Bible and book studies. They have made hard choices and tried to in some way accommodate everyone's worship preferences, a valiant effort to complete a task that is ultimately impossible. Undoubtedly, the most valuable gift the Pastors give us is their willingness to be vulnerable. We are eternally grateful and blessed to have Melodie and Thomas as our pastors.

We are thankful for the contributions of talented volunteers in multiple capacities. Several different lay leaders and guest speakers helped fill the virtual pulpit and participated in the popular chat session after worship. Thanks especially for the service of our 2021 advisory committee members: Sharon Irvin, Robin Hadfield, Diane Eaton, Kylie Meter, LaDonna Grubbs, Alinda Stelk, and the music and pastoral staff. After many years of leadership and service, Alinda Stelk is leaving our ranks to serve on another committee. Pam Schumacher has graciously agreed to become a new member of the committee. I am blessed to work with this group of committed people.

Kris Brenneis, Worship & Music Chair

Eastridge Hospice Singers

"Bringing the peace and comfort of music to those journeying through hospice care"

Throughout 2021, the Eastridge Hospice Singers continued to offer singing visits to those requesting their musical presence. From January through June, 56 weekly visits were provided by three individual singers, from their own homes, connecting virtually with seven friends in hospice care using computers, iPads, tablets and cell phones. From mid-April through December, small groups of singers were once again welcomed back into private homes and

residential facilities where they provided 56 bi-weekly in person visits for 18 friends in hospice care. Of the 25 people they sang for this past year, four were members of EPC.

This unique music ministry of our church is presently comprised of 28 hospice-trained singers representing ten church denominations in Lincoln and the surrounding area. Eight of its singing members belong to EPC. The Eastridge Hospice Singers are led by Patty Niemann and provide a cappella singing visits on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis for individuals receiving hospice care services. They feel honored, humbled and blessed to be a part of a person's end-of-life journey.

Patty Niemann, Eastridge Hospice Singers Director

Session Statistical Report

1. Active Members 01/01/2021 622

GAINS

- 2. Profession of Faith, Reaffirmation,
Restoration
 - a. 17 and under
 - b. 18 and over 2
 - c. Certificate 7
 - d. All other Gains 1
 - e. Total Gains 10
- 3. Subtotal 632

LOSSES

- 4.
 - a. Certificate 4
 - b. Death 18
 - c. All Other Losses 12
 - d. Total Losses 34
- 5. Total Active Members 12/31/2020 598

- 6. Age Distribution of Active Members
 - 25 and Under 70 Ages 56-70 117
 - Ages 26-40 99 Over 71 158
 - Ages 41-55 70 None Given 72
 - Presbytery members 4

- 7. Average Attendance at Sunday Worship
 - In-person: 74 (March 14-Dec 26)
 - Online: 59

In Memoriam 2021

Name	Date of Death	Ordained Elders
		Date of Ordination
Barnes, Lillian	11/12/2021	
Carlson, Keith	02/27/2021	02/08/1987
Chapman, Dorothy	12/17/2021	
Christophersen, Donna	01/08/2021	
Eddins, Stuart	03/17/2021	
Freeman, Lucille	02/06/2021	
Gardner, Richard	12/15/2021	
Gardner, Wanda	01/09/2021	
Haskins, Francis	04/20/2021	05/21/1967
Jensen, Margie	09/28/2021	
Kemble, Lois	02/11/2021	
Kuehn, Kathy	05/16/2021	12/05/2010
Loudon, JoAnn	10/15/2021	
Miller, Velma	12/13/2021	
Perry, Richard	01/03/2021	
Wickham, Lynn	12/15/2021	
Wittmaack, Norma	07/26/2021	
Young, Lawrence	02/19/2021	01/12/1965

Robin Hadfield, Clerk