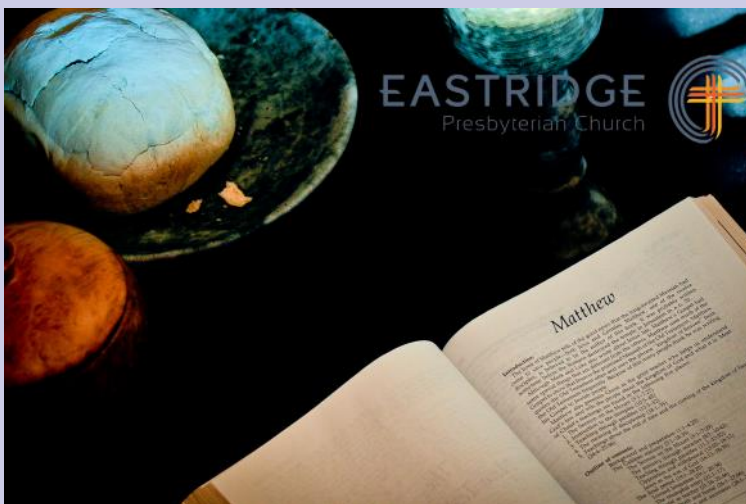




From the Pastor's Pen -

"The book of the beginning of Jesus Christ." This is how Matthew's Gospel begins, although it is translated many ways. The CEB says "a record of the ancestors;" Richard Swanson translates "book of the birthing;" the NRSV says "an account of the genealogy;" David Bentley Hart translates "a record of the lineage;" Eugene Peterson paraphrases "the family tree;" Warren Carter translates, "book of origin." The Greek wording is "biblos geneoseōs," which even in this alliteration gives us a fuller picture of what the original audience of this book would have heard. Genesis is the first word of the Greek Old Testament (called the Septuagint) that Matthew's hearers would have known, and it's why we call the first book of the Bible Genesis. Genesis is appropriately the first word of both the Old and New Testaments. It means beginning, to come into being at a specific moment, state of being (existence), life, history, lineage, family line, to come into being through birth.

Beginning. As this new year comes into being, it seems appropriate for us to take a closer look at the beginning of the story of Jesus Christ, son of Abraham, son of David. Who is this person - fully human, fully God - that is revealed to us in these pages? There is history here (in that these events are grounded in time) and there is also story here (in that these events tell us something greater about the God-with-us). As we read, hear, and study these stories again, I find myself wondering what we will learn about who God is, who you and I are, and who



we are together. In these pages will we find some sort of instruction or manual for the beginning of this new year with all its inevitable joy and sorrow, easiness and challenges, successes and failures, and genesis - or, existence, life.

Dear friends, as we enter this new year, may we discover again and anew who this God-with-us is, and who we are becoming as a result of our relationship with Immanuel as individuals and in our life together. Full disclosure here - while I love the study of this gospel, I find it the most challenging of the gospels. So I hope you are challenged by the stories Matthew tells us. He is writing for the believers, for

the church, for the faithful, who are concerned with righteousness (right living) and fulfillment (God's promise kept) in a time of chaos and scattering. How can God's people keep the faith when they are no longer able to...worship in the temple, gather safely in large groups, speak openly about their faith, see what God is

doing among them? Who is the God-with-us when the familiar is no longer customary, and who are we as a result?

As I write this, I have to say I do not know how to answer that question for the original hearers of this gospel, or for us today. I will also admit that my ability to tackle these questions changes daily. I know I am not alone, and that gives me strength and comfort. I believe strongly that God is with us. And if God is with us we are with each other, the Body of Christ in the world.

I look forward to the genesis.

In Christ, *Pastor Melodie*



Photos from our **December storytelling/caroling** event in the church parking lot:



The **Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department** announced this week that our Covid-19 Risk Dial is currently in the red zone, indication a severe risk of spread. Our Health and Safety Committee has determined that at this time we do not need to make any further changes to our response. However, we would like to remind everyone that masks are required while inside the building. We may temporarily suspend other select activities, such as coffee hour on Sunday mornings and the passing of the peace during in person worship.

During this month of January, there are many different factors that affect church attendance. We understand that illness, cold temperatures, and slick roads make worshipping online a preferred option. We welcome your presence with our community however you feel most comfortable during this winter season!





Trailblazers for January: The Trailblazers will meet Friday, January 21 for a Games & Soup Supper evening. 6:00 p.m.—Huxtable Lounge

If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Susan Taylor or the office. Trailblazers is a group of mostly retired couples and individuals, meeting monthly during the year (except summer).



YANA Group: YANA (You Are Not Alone)

will meet for a meal together the first Tuesday of the month (February 1). Contact the office or Berna Stading for more information. This is a group for those who have lost a spouse.



The Gathering Place in 2022: The Gathering Place sign up for 2022 is available online! Please read the instructions on the

sign up before serving.

<https://bit.ly/thegatheringplace2022>

EPC Book Club: See below for the final selections for the year. We meet the second Monday of each month at 7:00 pm in the conference room.

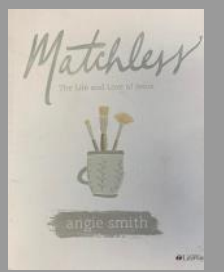
The Eastridge **Annual Meeting** will be Sunday, January 30 at 3:30 pm via Zoom.

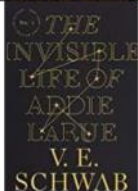
Look for a link as the date approaches! If you are an officer or committee chair, please submit your reports by January 14.



Officer installation will be Sunday, January 16 during the 9:00 am worship service.

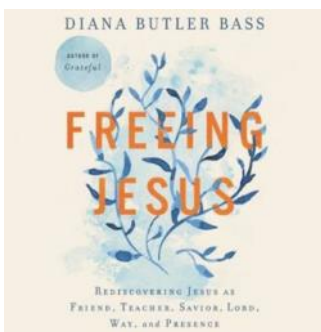
The **Wednesday morning Bible study** will begin *Matchless: the Life and Love of Jesus* the final week of January. We meet at 10:30 am each Wednesday in the conference room.



February 14		<i>Good Apple: Tales of a Southern Evangelical in New York</i> by Elizabeth Passarella
March 14		<i>The Four Winds</i> by Kristin Hannah
April 11		<i>The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue</i> by V.E. Schwab
May 9		<i>This Tender Land</i> by William Kent Krueger
June 13		<i>The Final Revival of Opal & Nev</i> by Dawnie Walton



You may donate to the **Elementary Faith Connection** snack time! For children, we can use individually wrapped snacks - snack crackers, gold fish, fruit snacks, cookies, cereal, etc. These items can be dropped off at the church or you can make a donation and we will do the shopping. Grocery store gift cards are also an option so we can add some fresh fruits and vegetables.



A study for the new year:
Pastor Melodie will be leading a study on *Freeing Jesus* by Diana Butler Bass on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 am, beginning Tuesday, January 18-February 21. Study will be via Zoom. Contact the office or Pastor Melodie if you are interested in joining!



Sign up to serve a meal to the youth! We are looking for folks who are willing to provide and serve dinner. You might be interested in serving individually or you might get a group together to provide dinner. At this time, we will be serving around 25. You can use the following link for a list of dates and to sign up. <https://bit.ly/EPCyouthmeal>

Eastridge is a very generous congregation! You fulfilled all the wishes for our **Angel Tree projects**.

Clinton Elementary: you provided gift cards for 25 children for Walmart or Target. They also received a pair of mittens (made by Mary Mulligan) and a Beanie Baby in a sleeping bag. (A special thanks for Charlene Neal for making the sleeping bags!)

Aging Partners: you provided grocery store gift cards for 30 clients of Aging Partners. They also received a pair of mittens.

Fresh Start: you provided gifts for 3 Fresh Start clients.

Presbyterian Mission Giving Catalog: Eleven monetary donations were made for items ranging from chickens and seeds to farming tools.

Thank you! ~ Susan Taylor



CLINTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dear Eastridge Friends of Clinton -
Bless ALL of You for once again remembering Clinton students & families this holiday season! I speak for all of them when I say 'Thank you deeply' - Again, your gifts (cards & Beanie Babies) remind our families their needs are important, they are seen - and the community holds them close. Many blessings to you all in the New Year!
Jinda Kern



As we begin 2022, we would like to start a **card ministry** with our children and youth. During the pandemic, one of the ways we remained in contact with the children and youth was through the mail. We received a lot of positive feedback about this, and they LOVED getting mail. It's something they don't get very much of in this digital age. Several of them would anxiously wait to go to the mailbox to see what the church was sending them this week. One of our families reported that their preschooler would often ask, "Did Mrs. Kris send me anything today?" Due to this response, we would like to continue reaching out to our children by sending cards. They would be sent for holidays, special days of the season, and birthdays. The church will provide the cards and the postage. Each volunteer would get about 10-12 children and/or youth with whom they would correspond. If you are willing to volunteer to part of this card ministry, please contact Kris Adler-Brammer at kadlerbrammer@eastridge.org or call the church office.

Eastridge Presbyterian Church has joined about thirty other faith communities in Lincoln to celebrate trees, including the role they play in God's creation, the value to God's people, and our responsibility to care for them, especially in a changing climate. To learn more about **Faith to Forest** visit <https://www.firstplymouth.org/catforest>



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS: DECEMBER 2021

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of November 18, 2021.

The Session removed from the member rolls Elizabeth (Lynn) Wickham, deceased on December 14, 2021.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the funeral of Lillian Barnes on November 18, 2021, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Rev. Thomas Dummermuth reported that he picked up the Bethlehem Peace Light in Iowa and will take it to North Platte.

The Session approved the schedule for the service of communion in 2022. It will be served on the first Sunday of each month and on Maundy Thursday.

The Session received a letter of thanks for the church's contributions to the Theological Education Fund. Eastridge contributed the largest total amount from churches in Homestead Presbytery and the fourth highest per capita amount.

The Session received a letter from Homestead Presbytery notifying the church that its 2022 per capita total is \$28,052.20.

The Session thanked Jen Olsen, who is completing her term of service on Session.



Matthew 25

Fighting hunger... Addressing systemic racism...Increasing congregational vitality

A new year, a new beginning, resolutions to change...sometimes we hear, "What will the new year bring," but the better question might be, "What can I bring to the new year?" Luke 12:48 says, "to whom much is given, much will be required." There is no doubt that each of us has been blessed with talents, material goods, and spiritual guidance. How can I share those gifts in 2022?

Matthew 25 offers a parable of ten virgins representing those who have faith in Jesus Christ and have been taught His gospel, including the Ten Commandments. Unlike others who have not heard the word, they live by the word. How can I live the word in 2022? Here are a few ideas--

I can help fight hunger by:

Donating to the EPC Food Pantry (contact Tami Rembolt or Kris Brenneis).

Help package and distribute food (Sunday or Monday afternoons).

Serve meals at the Gathering Place (contact Jo Bate-man).

Volunteer to help at the Lefler Middle School Food Market (contact Susan Budler).



I can be an anti-racist by:

Persistently examining my racial awareness and examine my beliefs and actions.

Speaking out when I witness racist behaviors.

Participating in community events celebrating the heritage of various cultures (Kwanzaa-December 26-January 1, MLK Day-January 17).

Writing, calling, or emailing people in authority to encourage or discourage their positions on race-related issues.

I can contribute to the vitality of our congregation by:

Paying my annual per capita (\$45.10) to the EPC office and paying for another member who cannot.

Providing individually wrapped snacks for the Elementary Faith Connection activities or college students (contact Kris Adler-Brammer).

Reaching out to another member of the congregation with a card (contact Kris Adler-Brammer).

Joining the Prayer Chain or praying for those listed under "prayer concerns" in the weekly bulletin (contact Thomas Dummermuth).

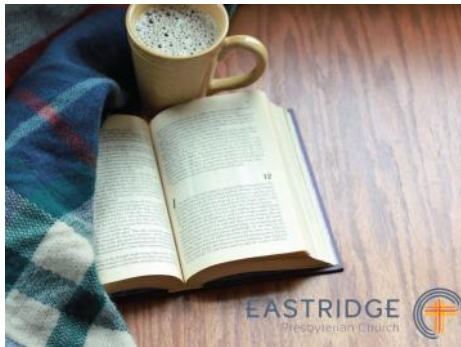
While you are considering your 2022 resolution, listen for more inspiration to the lyrics of "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" on YouTube. "Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will..."

Country version by John Fogerty, 3:02 min. <https://bit.ly/3yOfNb9>

Gospel version by Lynda Randle (Gaither Gospel Series), 3:11 min. <https://bit.ly/3qg7EIG>



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.



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



THANK YOU to all of you who participated in our youth fundraising efforts during the months of November and December! The

Ten Thousand Villages sale and the "We've Been Elfed" sign deliveries brought in \$1,553.50 for the Youth Fund. This will go a long way in funding our summer trip to Indianapolis for the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. We are so grateful for your support!

On Wednesday, January 12, our Youth Group gatherings will resume. We have a new dinner sign up ready to go and are looking for folks that would be willing to provide a meal for the group on Wednesday evening. If you are interested, click on the link to sign up.

<https://bit.ly/EPCyouthmeal>

If you have additional questions, please contact Kris Adler-Brammer at kadlerbrammer@eastridge.org.

New Year, New Beginnings
with EASTMONT

SMART MOVE
SENIOR LIVING WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19TH
The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel, 333 S 13th Street
Get ready to downsize your stuff and upsize your lifestyle in 2022 with this Smart Move workshop brought to you by Eastmont!

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
9:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

SESSION 1:
10:00 a.m. *Simplify Your Stuff*
Is your New Year's resolution to "get rid of stuff" and get organized? Enjoy a more simplified, uncluttered home with less to clean and more energy to put into your greatest passions with techniques by Melinda Stone, instructor of the popular OLLI class How to Simplify Your Stuff & Honor Your Memories.

11:30 a.m. Lunch Break

SESSION 2:
12:30 p.m. *Living Well in a Smaller Space*
Love HGTV? Then you'll love this master class in designing for smaller homes! Join experts from Lee Douglas Interiors to learn about trends in 2022, including smart layout strategies that will help you maximize your square footage. You'll walk away with fresh new design tips and ready to streamline your space with style!

EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



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Lincoln NE 68510

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