



## FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

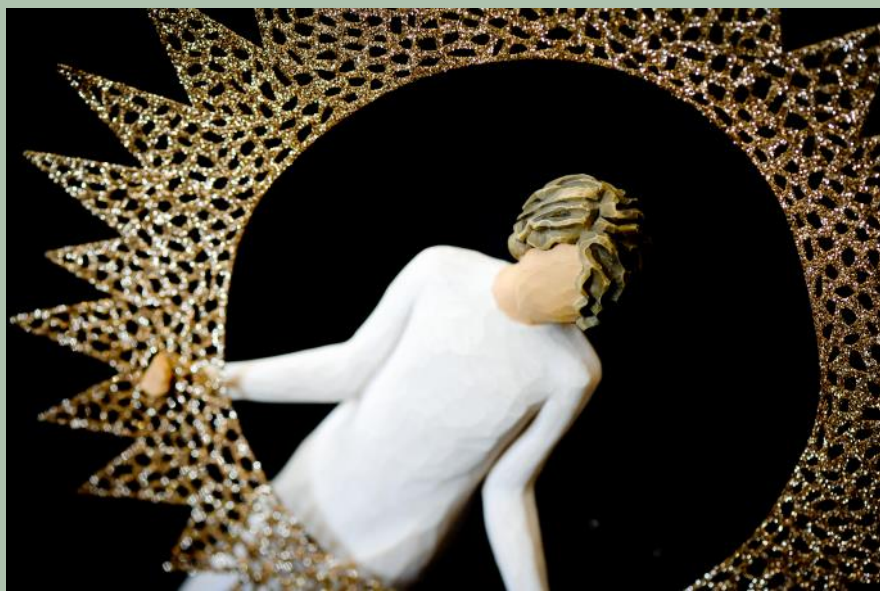
There are stories we know so well we cannot separate the beginning, the middle, and the ending from each other. As soon as the story starts, we know (even feel) the whole thing. As soon as we hear the first words, "They were the best of times, they were the worst of times" (A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens); "Little nutbrown hare, who was going to bed, held on tight to big nutbrown hare's very long ears" (Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney); "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered" (Luke 2:1). From the first words, we know the ending, and everything that happens in the middle: the duality of living between worlds at the time of the French Revolution; that big nutbrown hare loves little nutbrown hare to the moon and back; that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph, and the angels sang, and the shepherds came, and the world was changed.

Advent marks the new year in the Christian calendar, and is a time of waiting, preparation, and longing for the promised coming of Christ. This time of preparation is complete with the celebration of the birth of Jesus on Christmas day. The SEASON of Christmas then begins, finding fulfillment in the celebration of Epiphany. Every year, we tell this story, knowing the ending and with expectations of how the story makes us feel.

This year, we'd like to ask, how well do we really know the story? Do we know the story - backward AND forward?

The idea comes from the book, *Walking Backwards to Christmas* by Stephen Cottrell. Moved by the painting, "Nativity with Burning Bush" by Albert Herbert, he won-

dered about the power of a well-known story being told backward - first the ending, then in reverse to the beginning. As we began to wonder aloud about what an Advent series might look like if we were to tell the story backward, we grew more excited about the possibilities. First, obviously, is that from the very first Sunday of Advent we would sing Christmas Carols in worship! When Cottrell wrote his book, he noticed there are parts of the story that largely go untold; that there are looming uncertainties growing more pronounced throughout; the central role of women; the voices that do not speak; and that the beginning of the story goes all the way back to another baby born to set God's people free from slavery - Moses.



We invite you all to join us this Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany season as we get to know the story of Immanuel backwards (and forwards). We are excited this year to be able to worship together on Sunday mornings at 9 am (in person) and 10:30 am (in person and online); at our Mid-Week Meal and Worship from 6 pm-7 pm Wednesday

evenings; in a weekly book study; special services like the Cantata on December 11 at 9 am (in person) and the Longest Night Service on December 21 at 6:30 pm; Christmas Eve services at 5 pm (Children's Program) and 9 pm. We're also excited for the ability to have Christmas gatherings and parties, carol sing-a-longs and gift exchanges. In the midst of it all, we pray above all else that we all might be open to understanding anew what it means to know the story of Jesus' birth: that God is present with us, right now.

Happy Holy-days, Merry Christmas, and may God be with you, dear friends! ~Pastor Melodie



FOR VOLUNTEERS: Sign ups for December are below.

Wednesday and Sunday Distribution: <https://bit.ly/FPDecDist>

Filling boxes: <https://bit.ly/FPDecFill>



With your participation in our annual pledge drive, great and wonderful things can happen at Eastridge. Our goal is for everyone to pledge. If you missed getting a pledge card, they are available at the Welcome Desk. You may also give electronically! Check out the "Give" option on the church website.

Thank you for your response to our stewardship campaign so far! If you still have not turned in a pledge card, our finance committee welcomes the opportunity to better plan a church budget for 2023. Thank you for your gifts and pledges!

## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



### ChurchLife app info:

Beginning November 1, you will no longer be able to download the ChurchLife app.

IF YOU ALREADY HAVE IT on your phone, you will still be able to access it. For those who are interested in this app, click below for more information: <https://bit.ly/churchlifeinfo>

**Devotion Ministry:** 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.



**The Worship and Music Committee** is sponsoring another calendar fundraiser for our choral scholars. This year it's nature-inspired, not just birds.

Last year the calendars raised \$ 1,800 for the choral scholar program at Eastridge.

A sign up is available at the Welcome Desk. Please make checks payable to West Door Studios for \$ 30 and leave in office inbox.



## Can You Do This?

Would you be available to be a part of the EPC Meals on Wheels team? We need to fill the 2nd Monday slot, which would take from about 10:45-1:00 on the 2nd Monday of each month. After many years of loyal service, Gerald Hoppe finds it is time to step down from this task. Along with Lois, and since her passing, he has served faithfully for many years. **Thank you for your dedication, Gerald!**

If you are interested in picking up this opportunity to serve, or even finding out more about it, please contact Jo Bateman or the church office.



**Trailblazers for December:** Caroling with Patty Niemann & White Elephant Gift Exchange

7:00 p.m. December 16—Huxtable Lounge

Committee: Rafos, Schulze, Lanz



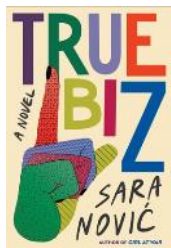
FROM THE EPC OUTREACH COMMITTEE:

"The expanded Child Tax Credit program drove down child poverty to a record low of 5.2% in 2021, lifting 2.1 million children out of poverty. In Nebraska 434,000 children and their families benefited from this expansion (Open Sky Policy Institute). The CTC could do more to reduce hunger and poverty among our nation's children than any single policy has in decades: it was estimated that maintaining

the expanded CTC would reduce child poverty in the U.S by 50%.

But Congress failed to extend the CTC expansion and it expired at the end of 2021, and food insufficiency increased by 25% in the first six months of the new year (JAMA Network Open).

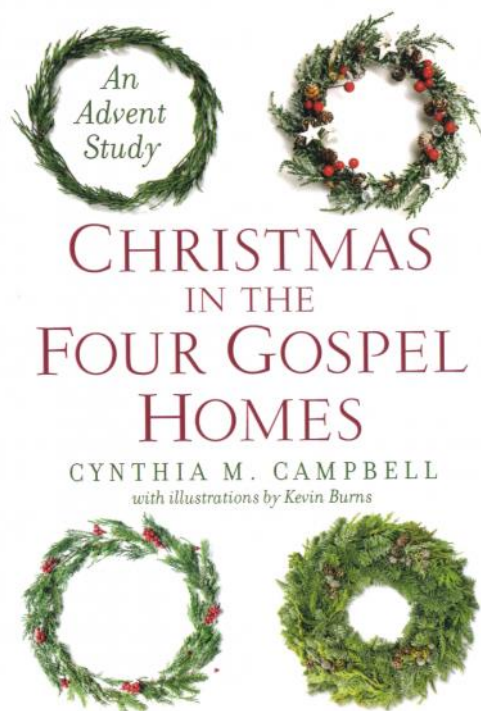
Currently there is interest in Washington in reviving the expanded Child Tax Credit, and some observers believe that Sen. Sasse might be convinced to support this legislation, which is expected to be introduced before Sasse resigns. Please send him a message: Sen. Ben Sasse, U. S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, <https://www.sasse.senate.gov/> Leaving a message at his website is quick and easy."



**EPC Book Club:** Join us on Monday, January 9 as we discuss the book *True Biz* by Sara Novic.

We meet each month during the school year for discussion and refreshments in the Conference Room at Eastridge!





Join us for our Advent Study:

*Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes* by Cynthia M. Campbell

When: Starting Thursday, December 1, 10-11 am for four weeks (Further dates: December 8, 15, and 22)

Where: Zoom.

How might a house look for Christmas based on what each Gospel says about it?

In *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes*, beautiful illustrations from architect Kevin Burns reimagine each of the four Gospels as a "house," which the church visits at Christmas.

In each section, Cynthia M. Campbell reflects on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus or the incarnation offered by each Gospel.

Join us in this engaging group study as we creatively reimagine the season and gain new and exciting inspirations for Advent.

Please sign up via the following link to receive instructions to join the zoom sessions:

<https://bit.ly/GospelHomes>

Copies of the book are available on the Welcome Desk at Eastridge Presbyterian Church, and wherever good books are sold.

Questions? Contact Pastor Thomas [tdummermuth@eastridge.org](mailto:tdummermuth@eastridge.org) or 402-488-1454

**YOUTH FUNDRAISING "YOU'VE BEEN ELFED"** – Eastridge Youth Group is hosting a grouping of Christmas Elf yard signs. Church members and friends will have the opportunity to "rent" the group of signs to place in neighbor or friends front yard for 48 hours. The rental fee is \$25 for one set of signs for one 48-hour period. The youth group will do the drop off and pick up. We will have two sets of signs, and each will have a place where you can put yourself in the sign to take pictures. This is a perfect thing for families with young children. You could "rent" one for yourself, your grandchildren or that favorite neighbor who has small children. The first day the signs will be available is Friday, December 2nd and the last day they are available is Friday, December 24th. In the next few weeks, youth group members will be available on Sunday morning to take your reservation. You will also be able to contact Kris in the church office to schedule a reservation.





## Coming in 2023! **How to Handle Covid Fatigue? Just Learn to WRAP®**

Everyone today has Covid Fatigue: Everyone. Even if no one in their family has had Covid... even if they didn't lose a job or face other dramatic changes ... even if they can ignore the divisive politics of Covid... They have Covid Fatigue. It has downgraded everyone's mental health. Everyone. The data show it and our personal experience says it's true. More than 1 in 5 Americans received some mental health therapy in 2020.

What can we do? People of faith are called to care for others and for ourselves. We're not mental health therapists. And yet...and yet... we can make a difference.

We can learn to WRAP. Wellness Recovery Action Planning is a powerful set of tools to help us care for others and ourselves. It is an evidence-based practice. An 8-hour seminar is not a magic solution, but it can be a major positive step. Participants in WRAP training create a personalized system of wellness tools and action plans. It helps people use sound mental health and spiritual principles to achieve a self-directed wellness vision that manages life's daily challenges. People use these tools for a lifetime.

SPONSORED BY: Eastridge Faith Partners



EASTRIDGE  
Presbyterian Church



## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS @ EPC

JOIN US THIS HOLY SEASON

### **Sunday morning worship**

9 am in person, 10:30 am in person and online  
*Cantata, Sunday, December 11 at 9 am in person;  
Worship at 10:30 am in person and online*

### **Wednesday Mid-Week Meal & Worship**

6 pm -7 pm in person only

### **Longest Night Service**

Wednesday, December 21, 6:30 pm in person and online

### **Christmas Eve Services**

December 24, 5 pm Children's Program;  
9 pm Worship in person and online

### **Christmas Day & New Year's Day**

10 am in person and online





## MATTHEW 25

in Bethlehem and the reception of Christ in the heart of the believer. It is an opportunity to examine our beliefs and values as modeled through Christ's life and guided by the larger body of Christ.

The General Assembly "affirms its conviction that neither the Church as the body of Christ, nor Christians as individuals, can be neutral or indifferent toward evil in the world; affirms its responsibility to speak on social and moral issues ... to reveal God's grace in places of suffering and need, to resist the forces that tyrannize, and to support the forces that restore the dignity of all men as the children of God, for only so is the gospel most fully proclaimed..." (from 1958 GA Statement).

As we enter the season of light, let us shine light, pray for, and uplift the ministries supported by our congregation with donations

The season of Advent begins on November 27, 2022. During this time, we anticipate the "coming of Christ" from two perspectives: the physical nativity

of time, talent, and treasure:

Berhane Yesus School in Ethiopia

Camp Calvin Crest

Eastridge Food Pantry

Faith Partners

Fresh Start

The Gathering Place

General Assembly (PCUSA)

Habitat for Humanity

Homestead Presbytery

Lefler Mobile Food Market

Lincoln Justice Ministry

Narcotics Anonymous

PCUSA Offerings-Pentecost, One Great Hour of Sharing, Peacemaking, Christmas Joy, and Thank

"Searching and Fearless" AA Group

Sudan and South Sudan Regional Presbyteries

Tabitha Meals on Wheels

Theological Education Fund

You Are Not Alone (YANA) Group





## THE SUNRISE ROAD PODCAST

Coming  
2023!!



Photos from Justice in Action event:







## Poinsettia Order Form

If you wish to provide a Poinsettia for the church sanctuary for Advent, please complete this form and mail or bring to the church office by December 12. Make all checks payable to Eastridge Church noting on the check that it is for a Poinsettia. **(Please return check with this form.)**

Please state exactly how you want your contribution printed in the bulletin.

Donated by \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

No. of flowers \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia cost \$12.00 each      Total \_\_\_\_\_

I wish my Poinsettia to be taken to a shut in. \_\_\_\_\_

I will pick up my Poinsettia after the Worship services on Christmas Eve \_\_\_\_\_

### Join us for **Mid-Week Meals and Worship**

**Activities during Advent!** There is a sign up here:

<https://bit.ly/mealsinadvent>

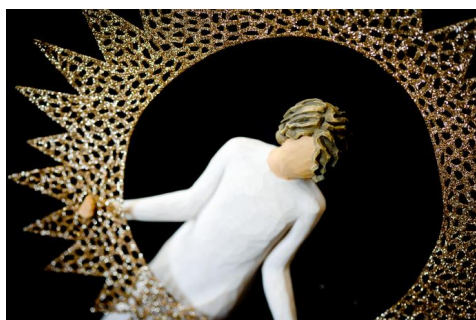
Meal at 6:00 pm; Worship Activity at 7:00 pm.

**November 30:** Crock Pot Meals

**December 7:** bring a pizza to share!

**December 14:** Holiday Meal: bring a side dish

**December 21:** Pot luck: bring a main dish, side, or dessert to share



Join us on Sunday, December 11 at 9am for our annual **Christmas Cantata!** We will experience the Christmas story from a different perspective as we “walk backwards” through the greatest story ever told. Music will be provided by the Chancel Choir, Kirk Ringers, Brent Shaw, and Brian Lew. We hope to see you there!





Eastridge is **STILL** collecting plastic bags through the **TREX program!** We will be able to furnish our new green space on the north side of the building with a TREX bench. For more information, check out the receptacles in the entry. **ONLY** bags, **NOT** any other plastic recyclables accepted. **So far, we have one bench! We can collect for another, so keep collecting and bringing in your clean plastic bags!**

## NexTrex®

**Advent Candle Lighting:** Please let the office know if you would like to participate in this ministry. Couples, families, individuals welcome!

We will light the candle during both Sunday morning services during advent, and both Christmas Eve services.



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  
 Laura Siemsen.....Administrative Assistant  
 Office number.....402-488-7844  
 Melodie Jones Pointon: [mjonespointon@eastridge.org](mailto:mjonespointon@eastridge.org)  
 Thomas Dummermuth: [tdummermuth@eastridge.org](mailto:tdummermuth@eastridge.org)

## MEET THE STAFF

### Eastridge Presbyterian Women Cookie Sale

Just in time for Christmas gatherings, Sunday December 11, the Eastridge Presbyterian Women will be selling cookies to raise money for mission projects. Cookies will be for sale between the services.



**Angel Tree at Eastridge~Holiday Giving 2022:** The Angel Tree with angels/ornaments for gift giving is in the Welcome Center. Most of the angels will have a wish/request for gift cards for Clinton Elementary and Aging Partners. We will have a few angels with wishes for Women at Fresh Start and games for Clinton families. Some will be ornaments for Presbyterian Giving for World Mission. There will be instructions on the ornaments. Add a pair of gloves or mittens on the tree for adults and children! Thank you for bringing joy to others. If questions, contact Susan Taylor at 402-617-8414.

**EASTRIDGE**  
Presbyterian Church



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