



The last couple of weeks the number of conversations I have had with people about “what they are going to give up for Lent” seems to be more than the number of fingers and toes on my hands and feet. In reading through some of the articles that I subscribe to, I found this one from Traci Smith, author of *Faithful Families for Lent, Easter, and Resurrection*, helpful especially when you are talking with children and youth. I hope this will be helpful to folks of all ages as you observe Lent this year.

Simplifying During Lent by Traci Smith

Perhaps many of you think of Lent as a time to give something up. It’s a common practice, and there is value to it, I think. When we let go of things that we cling to, we are able to focus on other things. Maybe we’re able to let go of that which doesn’t serve us. Some people choose to let go of food during the day or meat on Fridays. This letting go during Lent is one of the pillars of Lent: fasting. Fasting, together with prayer and almsgiving make up the three pillars of faith practice.

I think fasting can sometimes be a problematic practice, especially with young children, and especially in US culture. Restriction, denial, and self-punishment can all get mixed up in there. For this reason, I wonder about adopting a practice of simplifying during Lent. I think the idea is the same and the Spirit is the



same. The language and the mindset are slightly different. If you’re interested in simplifying a bit during the season of Lent, here are some ideas. These are taken directly from my book *Faithful Families for Lent, Easter and Resurrection*.

Instead of : Giving up screens

Try: Going outside more

Instead of: Giving up sugary drinks

Try: Drinking more water

Instead of: Giving up meat

Try: Eating more fruits and vegetables

Instead of: Giving up shopping or spending

Try: Making something you would normally buy

Instead of: Giving up negative talk

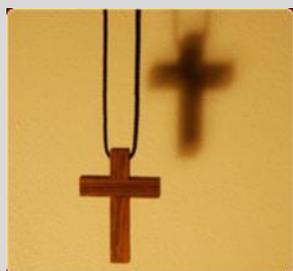
Try: Focusing on complimenting others

Instead of: Giving up internet scrolling

Try: Reading more or listening to more audiobooks

A Prayer for Simplifying: God, when many things compete for my attention, help me to focus on one thing at a time. When things are messy in my space or in my mind, help me to be gentle with myself as I sift through and keep only what is needed. Amen.

~FROM KRIS ADLER-BRAMMER, Director of Children and Youth Ministries



Sign up to usher in 2023! The current sign up is updated with dates for this year. Typically, three ushers needed per Sunday.

Check it out here:

<https://bit.ly/epcnewusher>

In November 2022, at Eastridge Church, the assembly of Justice in Action members voted on two issues to address for 2023. Criminal Justice Reform and Mental Health Services were selected. Justice in Action members began learning about services and practices in our community.

This month I want to give you an update from the Mental Health Committee.

After ten listening sessions with groups such as Region V Mental Health Services, Bryan Hospital, the Lancaster County Mental Health Crisis Center and TASC (Targeted Adult Service Coordination) a problem statement was composed:

“People experiencing mental health issues are unable to access timely and appropriate care and often end up interacting with the criminal justice system which is costly and robs them of the opportunity to receive the ongoing care they need to lead productive and positive lives.”

This Mental Health committee identified the following issues as common threads:

- *A serious lack of coordination among services available in Lincoln/Lancaster County
- *A serious lack of human resources/staff to provide mental health services and case management
- *Gaps in the continuum of care, especially to prevent crisis or to maintain stability after a crisis

The next few weeks will involve the committee continuing to meet with mental health professionals to provide clarity and the selection of a specific issue that will be brought to the board for approval. This issue/resolution will be our focus at the JUSTICE IN ACTION NEHEMIAH RALLY on May 4th where we will have invited local political leaders to join us in our quest to improve conditions in the area of mental health.

Individuals involved in Eastridge Presbyterian Church’s Justice Network will be meeting with organizations and groups in the next six weeks to share additional information and to invite you to join in the work of justice in our community!

**To learn more and to get involved contact: sarabevans@windstream.net
Mark your calendar for the Justice in Action Nehemiah Rally on May 4th!**

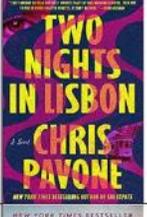
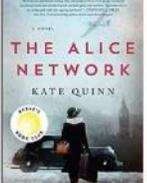




EASTRIDGE

Presbyterian Church



March 13		<i>Violeta</i> by Isabel Allende	Discussion & refreshments: Donna Gustafson
April 10		<i>The Island of Sea Women</i> by Lisa See	Discussion & refreshments: Susan Taylor
May 8		<i>Two Nights in Lisbon</i> by Chris Pavone	Discussion & refreshments: Judith Keller
June 12		<i>The Alice Network</i> by Kate Quinn	Discussion & refreshments: Kris Brenneis

Upcoming EPC Book Club picks for the spring 2023 session!

Join us at 7:00 pm on the second Monday of each month from September through June.

We will start to choose our 2023-2024 picks soon. Book Club members, start to gather your ideas for picks for next year!

Selections for the remainder of this current 2022-23 year at left.

For more information, contact the church office.

Join us
Wednesdays this
Lent from 6-7 pm
in the Huxtable
Lounge for dinner
and reflection
around the table.

Agape Meal



Feb 22 (Ash Wednesday) -
Breakfast Casserole
March 1 - Crock Pot Meal
March - 8 Pizza Night
March 15 - Pie Day
March - 22 Potluck
March 29 - Holiday Meal (ham
provided, bring your favorite
Easter side or dessert)

*All meals are 'potluck' - but your presence is more important than the food you bring!



Hospice is not a diagnosis; it is a plan of care for the diagnosis by Gabrielle Elise Jimenez

What is hospice? I get asked this question a lot. I have also heard the many misconceptions about what hospice is, and I have seen fear, a lot of fear. To many people, hospice is a death sentence and it is dark and scary and means there is no turning back... you are going to die. And this is true, because when given the hospice order, it means you have received a terminal diagnosis with the assumption you have 6 months or less to live. Could that change? Yes. I have seen people thrive and get off of hospice. I love that, I hope for that. Unfortunately, it doesn't happen often. But hospice isn't the diagnosis, it isn't the death sentence; hospice is a plan of care. It is the gathering of a team that together find a way to support the patient and the family during what will be the hardest time of their life.

When I start seeing a patient, they are already on hospice; they are already aware of their diagnosis, their prognosis, and the inevitable way things will turn out. I wish so badly that I could change the outcome; I think all of us working in this field feel the same way. But we can't, and we are realistic about that.

What we can do, however, is make sure that you always feel supported, that you are relieved of pain and distress, that you are provided the supplies, the medications, the education and support you and your loved ones need to work through this process.

Most of you have heard the names Frank Ostaseski, BJ Miller, Jessica Zitter, Barbara Karnes, Katy Butler, and my personal favorite, Gary Pasternak. These are all people I have listened to, read their books and followed as they shared their lessons about the end of life. There are so many more I could name and all of them have found a way to raise the dark

cloud off "hospice", just enough for me to realize that death, while painful, scary and terrifying, can actually be beautiful. They are the ones who have taught me about what bedside manner truly means, how compassion plays such a key role at the end of life and how as humans we need to practice more kindness and learn the true meaning of being present. These people are not angels, they are human beings who give completely to other human beings going through a difficult experience. I respect and admire them and I am grateful to them for showing me the way.

I certainly can't speak for anyone else that works in this field, but for myself I can say that there is no end to what I can learn and how I can grow and how excited that makes me feel. I want to learn more, I want to continue to grow and to be able to not only provide a kinder experience for my patient's and their families, but to also share what I am given to others just starting out. We are a community of people who give our hearts freely and without need for anything in return, except perhaps the knowledge that we might have made a difference in a difficult experience and truly provided the soft landing every human being deserves to have.

We are all going to die, and there is no rhyme or reason how one is chosen over another or how short or long our time will be. But the one thing we can choose is how we are treated and cared for when that time comes. I can assure you that if you are given a terminal diagnosis and you go on hospice, there will be a team that will work collaboratively to ensure the care you and your loved ones receive is compassionate and kind.

Photo: I took this photo at the Bernardo Winery in San Diego, artist is unknown. It is a beautiful wood sculpture that I was very drawn towards. I have tried to find the artist but have not been successful.



Shared with permission from the author.



UPDATES TO FOOD PANTRY:

The Pantry Committee met to discuss a wide variety of topics related to how the pantry has been running and struggling to keep up with client demand. In order to more efficiently continue to serve clients we have made the decision to make the following changes effective March 15th.

1. Wednesday distribution will only be for in-person shoppers. There will not be drive thru available on Wednesdays. We have extended the distribution time to be 4:00-7:00 pm. We have split up the volunteer shift into two shorter shifts, 3:45-5:30 and 5:25 - 7:15 pm. We feel this change will allow us to continue to serve shoppers without duplication of shoppers each week.
2. Sunday distribution will only be for drive-thru boxes. There will be no in-person shopping available on Sundays. This will continue to provide clients the convenience of drive thru. Our drive thru numbers have continued to increase each week and it has become overwhelming to try to fill additional boxes while we have shoppers in the pantry. This will allow us to only focus on drive-thru clients during this time. Also, we will only be giving out one box per family, and an adult family member must be present in the car to receive a box. This means no more people requesting additional boxes for families who are not present.
3. Shoppers will only be allowed to sign up to shop 2 times per month.
4. We are scheduling a meeting for any volunteers who currently serve as "Lead" and who are interested in this role as well. We want to be able to tighten up shopping "rules" so we can provide more consistency in serving clients. If you are interested in attending this meeting, please contact sarabevans@windstream.net. We will share these decisions after this meeting.
5. We are communicating with Southwood Lutheran, who manages the client sign-ups for in-person shopping to develop a way to manage clients who consistently no-show their shopping appointments. We will share more information after we have found a solution.



6. We will be redoing our clipboard shopping lists to better manage our resources.

7. We will be changing the Sign-Up Genius monthly sign up to stay the same month to month. Signups will be available on an ongoing basis by deleting old dates and adding new dates to the established signup page. There will be one signup for filling boxes, and another for distributions. The distributions signup will have notes indicating if it is for drive-thru or in-person shoppers. The in-person shopping dates will have two shifts listed. The boxing sign up will also have two shifts, as we will be filling a larger quantity of boxes in total for Sunday drive-thru. Boxing will only occur on Thursdays due to this change. Each shift will fill the number of boxes shown in the volunteer board. Boxers should only put items in boxes as shown on the sticky notes posted around the pantry or are marked

as additional or substitute items for boxes. We are intentional on what items we put into boxes so we can manage our inventory based on the availability of items from the Food Bank.

Here are the Sign-up Genius links that include March dates before these changes take place:

<https://bit.ly/FPFebFill>

<https://bit.ly/FPFebDist>

Here are the new Sign-Up Genius Links that will remain the same month to month going forward after March 15th: <https://bit.ly/FPDistFood>

<https://bit.ly/FPFillingBoxes>

We hope these changes will make things more manageable for the pantry and make volunteering more appealing to you all. Please feel free to provide us feedback as to how the new changes are going after we have tried it for a couple weeks. The Committee will be meeting again in April to evaluate if the changes are working well or need more adjustments.

Thank you for your commitment to our pantry. Food Pantry Committee: Tami Rembolt, Kris Brenneis, Steve Taylor, Hope Shortridge, Cheryl Ferree, Sara Bevans



The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering is an ecumenical endeavor that now involves nine denominations and Church World Service. Founded in 1946 by Episcopal Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill, the goal was to raise one million dollars in one hour for World Relief. In 1949, church leaders from several denominations began working together to promote this effort. Major networks broadcast a show, called “One Great Hour”, on Saturday, March 26. The broadcast, featuring President Truman and popular musicians and actors of the time, closed with the request to make a sacrificial contribution at their own place of worship the next morning. Today in the PCUSA each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Pres-

byterian Hunger Program, assists in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and promotes opportunities for low-income communities to develop solutions of their own challenges through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. At Eastridge this Special Offering is traditionally received on Palm Sunday.



Eastridge is planning some church visioning... April 15 and 16.

It is a time of learning and discerning; a time of looking at the past, who Eastridge has been, and what Eastridge has experienced; a time of dreaming and stretching as we wonder together about the future. The History Event will be very interactive. The Learning Event will include a time of teaching, small group discussion, and large group discovery. More info to come!

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 15. You can use the following link for a list of dates and to sign up.

<https://bit.ly/YGdinner>



Eastridge welcomes these new members, who joined recently! **Jessica Cooksley, Kip & Celeste Illian, Adam & Allie Kriz, Sara McInerney, Bill Reichert, Steven & Heather Wherry** all joined 2-23-23.

Jessica is the mother of Sloane, Skylar, Sutton, & Anthony.

Kip and Celeste are the parents of Frances, 4, and are transferring from Beatrice.

Adam & Allie are the parents of Jack, 2. They are expecting baby #2 in June!

Sara is re-joining Eastridge following her return to Lincoln from Iowa.

Bill has been worshipping with us for about a year; you may have seen him in chancel choir, and as organist/pianist.

Steven and Heather have been worshipping with us for around a year as well: Heather is in the chancel choir.

Welcome to all!





THE GATHERING PLACE: Eastridge Presbyterian Church arranges to provide 4-5 volunteers at The Gathering Place, a local soup kitchen, on the 4th Monday of each month. For more information on what this entails, contact the church office. Thank you to all Eastridge members who volunteer to serve at The Gathering Place.

A sign up for 2023 is here: <https://bit.ly/TheGatheringPlace2023>

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS: The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of January 26, 2023, and the minutes of the Congregation and Corporation Meeting of January 29, 2023.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services on February 5, 2023.

The Session approved the Annual Statistical Report for 2022.

The Session removed the following from the member rolls: Elizabeth LaRue, deceased February 4, 2023; Margaret Carlson, deceased February 17, 2023; Steve Longacre, deceased February 17, 2023; John VerMaas, deceased February 19, 2023; and Marilyn Aubert, deceased February 20, 2023.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the funeral service of Elizabeth LaRue on February 9, 2023, at Lincoln Memorial Funeral Home.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service of Peggy Summers

on February 2, 2023, at Lincoln Memorial Funeral Home and the funeral service of Margaret Carlson on February 22, 2023, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church. The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon and the Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the baptism of Rylan Michael Meter on January 29, 2023.

A motion was carried to host the meeting of Homestead Presbytery on November 9, 2023.

A motion was carried to receive into membership Jessica Cooksley, Kip and Celeste Illian, Adam and Allison Kriz, Sara McInerny, William Reichert, and Steven and Heather Wherry.

The Session approved an amended policy addressing on-site sales and fundraising. The Session received a report from the Homestead Presbytery meeting. The presbytery adopted a new structure which includes leadership by a team of volunteers and reorganization of committees.



Eastridge Presbyterian Church,

With everything going on in the world today, please take a moment and see what God is doing through Calvin Crest. Please click the link below to read our 2022 Annual Report (at least look at the photos). Your prayers and support are what makes this place what it is.

Thank you!

<https://calvincrest.org/annual-report/>

Craig Huffman, Executive Director

P.S. We are offering summer camp opportunities this year. If you are interested in learning more, please check out the website for more information. Summer Camp Information

CALVIN CREST CAMP CONFERENCE AND RETREAT CENTER INC, 2870 County Road 13, Fremont, NE 68025





CHILDREN IN WORSHIP...DID YOU KNOW?

Children of all ages are WELCOME in worship! To assist them in their participation in worship, we have worship bags available by age. Please feel free to grab one from the narthex or request one from an usher. We also offer a worship connection during both services that helps that children understand the worship Bible story. We hope this might spark something for families to talk about throughout the week.

We also have a nursery available for infants through

Pre-K aged children. It is located downstairs in one of our Faith Formation classrooms. Currently, the nursery is available on the first and third Sundays of the month.

Our Faith Formation for preschool children (3yr – 5yr) is also available. If you are interested in your preschool participating, please contact DCE Kris Adler-Brammer.

CHILDREN

The Sunrise Road Podcast: This podcast can be found on all major podcast platforms and can be found on Facebook and YouTube. For a list of guests, check out the February newsletter. More info to come on future sessions!



WRAP® was a great success! Thank you to all who attended the first two sessions (session three info to come).

Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP®) is a powerful set of tools to help us care for others and ourselves and is an evidence-based practice. People use these tools for a lifetime!

We will see those of you who signed up at 10:00 am again on a Sunday morning in the Fellowship Hall (final date to come...check your email). Brunch items provided.



Out of Chaos, Hope: While frantic rescue workers continued their increasingly futile efforts to locate survivors, the death toll due to the magnitude 7.8 earthquake in Turkey and Syria passed 41,000 on February 14. Participating in the international response, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is providing emergency relief and short-term recovery. PDA will remain active through the recovery process, working with partners to determine long-term program needs and providing financial support for building resilience. Gifts can be made by phone (800-872-3283), online (pcusa.org/pda), or by writing a check to Eastridge Presbyterian Church with “earthquake” in the memo line.



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE



Trailblazers for March: We will gather at 7:00 p.m. on March 17 in Huxtable Lounge

Speaker: "Your First Car": bring a picture if you have one, or come with a story

Committee: * Dave & Julie Gies, Sandra Hilsabeck Hastings and Bryce Hastings



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.



THANK YOU to everyone who "voted" in the **Souper Bowl of Caring**. Eastridge correctly picked the winner of the Super Bowl. In addition, we also collected 255 lbs of shampoo, conditioner, and cleaning products to help stock the Eastridge Food Pantry. Way to go!



Fourth Friday Women's Coffee:

On the fourth Friday of each month, join this (mostly) retired group of ladies that meet in Huxtable Lounge here at Eastridge for coffee at 8:30 am. Join us March 24!

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
Thomas Dummermuth: tdummermuth@eastridge.org

MEET THE STAFF

A Sanctified Art for Lent:

Check out our online devotion ministry for daily (Monday-Friday) devotions, plus daily (seven days a week through Lent) Facebook posts from *A Sanctified Art*, our Lent resource for 2023.



seeking:
honest questions
for deeper faith

EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



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