



FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN...

In addition to all the usual advent celebrations and preparations of music, decorations, festive gatherings, Bible studies, we also celebrated the baptisms of two babies. It's easy to love baptisms, a wonderful celebration of the community where the baptized is welcomed into the Body of Christ. In our Reformed tradition, it is a "sign and seal" - an outward sign of an inward grace. Or, it's something we can see and feel that celebrates something God does that we feel but cannot see. What a joy it is, as well, for our community to see the newly baptized, often officially presented for the first time. Of course, part of our tradition includes not only acknowledging and receiving the promises of God, but also making promises - for the parents to raise the child in the Christian faith, and for the congregation to share the love of God with the child as they grow.

Oh, how quickly they will grow!

As we enter this new year, we will spend some time in the texts that mark Jesus' growth from newborn in a borrowed stable, through his presentation at the temple, to his baptism, to his conversations in the temple. Jesus will grow up quickly as we explore these stories together. The new year's celebrations will fade as we turn the calendar to February for an early Lenten season.

Here, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church, we will also experience ritual celebrations and growth that keep us turning again and again to those baptismal promises. Some of those things have become part of the fabric of who we are - in our Tuesday Afterschool Program, Youth Group, Bible studies, and ordination and installation of officers. Some of those things will mark an



acknowledgement of who we are today - as the task force on belonging continues its work; and as we look to change the bi-laws for our governing boards - but they do not change whose we are. Rather, I believe they mark the spiritual growth of our faith community as we again embrace and explore what it means to be "Christ-Centered. Community Strong."

It was 1983 when the two largest Presbyterian denominations in the United States sought reunification. The split originally occurred over issues of theology and social justice in the mid-1800s, and it was time for the Body of Christ to re-center, together. In true Presbyterian fashion, a committee was formed to create a

new confession of faith for the occasion. It was to be powerful and strong in its language, focusing on those things that bind us together as a new reunited denomination. The result was a confession called, "A Brief Statement of Faith, 1983" and has a strong opening statement, "In life

and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve."

Friends, as we embark on this new year of 2024, may you return again and again to the promises made and received in baptism as you continue to grow in faith. Our prayer as a community of faith is that this place can be a welcoming place for your questions, your fears, your doubts, and your explorations of who and whose you are - God's own beloved.

Happy New Year!

Pastor Melodie



AMENDMENTS TO CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION BYLAWS TO BE VOTED ON AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON JANUARY 28, 2024

Earlier this year, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of Eastridge and began to look to the future. The Session established three task forces, including one to consider restructuring the boards of the church. We currently have 54 leadership spots on our four boards, and an average worship attendance of 95 in person and 22 screens online. We estimate that roughly 130 people worship with our community every week, meaning that 1/2 of our weekly attendance is needed to fill our boards. We wondered what we might be able to do as a community if our board structure looked different and required fewer elected leaders.

The Task Force developed, and the Session approved a proposal to restructure the church boards, which requires amendments to the congregation and corporation bylaws. The proposal was presented at the congregational meeting in November and will be voted on at the congregational meeting on January 28. Opportunities to ask questions or to learn more will be available at listening sessions on January 7 and January 21 following worship.

The task force recognized that the work of the church family remains the same, and it is the hope of the Task Force that by a revised structure of leadership will create avenues for members of all ages and walks of life to engage in tasks that fit their strengths and spiritual gifts.

In reviewing the work of the church boards and committees, we learned that there is overlap in the work of the Session and the Board of Deacons. This sometimes results in conflicts in scheduling or planned activities. To address this, the Task Force is recommending the consolidation of the Board of Deacons into the committees of the session. It will no longer be a separate board. Two new Session committees will be responsible for the activities currently overseen by the Deacons. These committees are Congregational Engagement and Congregational Care. The structure will make it possible for Individuals to volunteer for specific projects or activities without committing to serve a three-year term on the Board of Deacons.

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AMENDMENTS TO CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION BYLAWS TO BE VOTED ON AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON JANUARY 28, 2024

(continued from preceding page)



The Memorial and Endowment Committee will become a function of the Board of Trustees. Its members will no longer be elected by the congregation but will be recruited by the Board of Trustees. At least three people will serve, and their primary role will be to monitor the investments of the church, including their gifts and disbursements.

Other recommended changes include reducing the number of people on the Board of Trustees from 9 members to 7 members. The Nominating Committee will be reduced from 6 members of the congregation to 3 members of the congregation. The committee will be chaired by a Session member currently serving and will include a representative of the Board of Trustees and a representative from the Congregational Care Committee.

The restructuring proposal also includes changes to the Session committees and in some cases, to the number of Elders chairing the committees. These were identified in the document distributed in November.

George Kilpatrick and Robin Hadfield co-chaired this Task Force, which included Susan Budler and Robby Shortridge, as representatives of the Board of Trustees, Darrell Nelson, as a representative of the Memorial and Endowment Committee, and Jo Bateman and Sarah Bevans, as representatives of the congregation.

The Task Force hopes that this proposal will help Eastridge respond to the changes in the past few years and allow Eastridge to continue serving God as a community of faith. A copy of the document including the proposed bylaw amendments, which was circulated in November, may be requested from the church office.

Dear Faith Family -

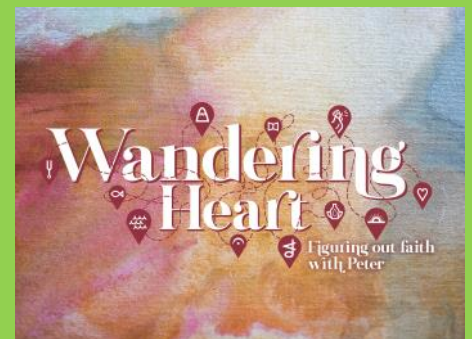
Thank you for all the prayers and well wishes surrounding our family over the past few months. We felt your prayers as Steve and I traveled to England for his grandmother's funeral, and I feel them now as I am able to be with my sister for her surgery. It is a true gift to have the support of the session, colleagues, and the community during this time.

In Christ, *Melodie*



Lent Sneak Peek:

Join us during Lent for mid-week activities and a new sermon series: *Wandering Heart: Figuring out Faith with Peter*. In 2024, Lent begins on February 14 (Ash Wednesday).





PLEDGE CARD INFO: When you turn in a commitment/pledge card, it helps our Finance Committee plan better for 2024. Thank you to those of you who have already turned in your pledge cards! Here are some of the responses we have received from the back-of-the-card prompt, “Why I Love EPC...”

- Young, friendly, good ministers.
- We are “home” in the pew.
- Many caring friends.
- This church is part of my spiritual family. I love the music and the fellowship along with the Bible study opportunities.
- The pastors, the caring people. Love my church family!
- I love the authenticity of the people. People are at Eastridge because they want to be here and

it shows in how we love and care for each other.

- Beautiful music
- Family atmosphere
- Great fellowship
- Outreach a priority
- Great sermons
- Variety of activities

ESTIMATE OF GIVING CARD 2024

EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church

Our Mission Statement:
The God of Scripture calling individuals into community through Christ, empowered by the Spirit to worship, learn and serve.

My gift to the ministries of Eastridge Presbyterian Church:

MY COMMITMENT IS:
\$ _____ per _____
☐ week ☐ month ☐ quarter ☐ year

Name _____ Date _____
Address _____ Apt. No. _____ Phone () _____
Email _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Reminders:
• please update your automatic payments in January
• Inquire in the church office if you'd like to make automatic payments

Check out the latest list of volunteer opportunities on a flyer at the Welcome Desk. In particular, **Worship & Music committee members would like to request help to take down Christmas decorations on Sunday, January 7 following worship.**



Faith Connection for Youth: Youth programming is on Wednesdays from 6:00pm to 7:30pm.

For this school year, our time together will include dinner, recreation, fellowship, and study. Sign up to serve a meal to the youth! Sign up is here:

<https://bit.ly/youthmeal2324>



Church Leadership:

Listening sessions for questions regarding the proposed changes to bylaws for board/committees will be in M12 following worship on January 7 and 21. Join members of the task force to ask questions you may have!

A recent thank you note received from Calvin Crest (below). EPC's Outreach Committee has chosen Camp Calvin Crest as one of the groups the church supports annually.

*FRIENDS AT EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS GIFT
TO CALVIN CREST THAT ENABLES US TO
PROVIDE SUMMER CAMP OPPORTUNITIES TO
YOUTH PEOPLE AND YEAR-ROUND FACILITIES
WHICH ALLOWS GROUPS, INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES
ENJOY GOD'S CREATION & BUILD THEIR
PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH.
YOUR SUPPORT HAS BEEN STEADFAST
THROUGHOUT CAMP'S HISTORY. PERCE!
DAVID FREEDL, BOARD MEMBER*

Aging Partners would like to extend a huge thank you for all of the generous gift cards, puzzles, and mittens donated for our community seniors. These gifts are delivered to low-income isolated older adults who otherwise would not have received anything this Christmas. It is heartwarming to see their smiles when we deliver the gifts- thank you from Aging Partners and all the gift recipients!



EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



Order your 2024
Calendar

to support the Eastridge Food
Pantry!



It is a 12 full color calendar featuring the birds found in our beautiful state of Nebraska (most right here in Lincoln)!
Perfect to give as a gift as well.

Calendars are \$30, payable to West Door Studios.
If you'd like to pay via Venmo, account information below (please make sure you are sending the funds to West Door Studios, not anything associated with the church or church's email address).
If you are outside Lincoln, please include address information either in Venmo, or via message.
The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land. Song of Solomon 2:12
Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell, they sing among the branches. Psalm 104:12



Photos by Donna Gustafson

West Door Studios Donna
Gustafson Photography
@WestDoorStudios DonnaGustafson

EASTRIDGE FOOD PANTRY:

Thank you for purchasing a calendar for the recent Food Pantry fundraiser!
Your support of this fundraiser resulted in \$ 700 donated to the EPC Food Pantry.

Links for volunteers for Sunday drive thru and Wednesday distribution plus box prep below:

Distribution: <https://bit.ly/FPDistFood>
Filling boxes: <https://bit.ly/FPFillingBoxes>



EASTRIDGE
FOOD PANTRY



Annual Report:

Committee chairs, please submit your articles for the Annual Report by Sunday, January 14. A copy of the 2022 report is online, on the Eastridge main page (if you would like a reminder/template of what was submitted last year!)

Soup Supper



Trailblazers for the month of January:

Games, Soup Supper & Fellowship at 6:00 p.m. January 19—Huxtable Lounge. Committee: *Duling, Neal, Rembolt, Woito, Mitchell. Contact the office for more information about this group.

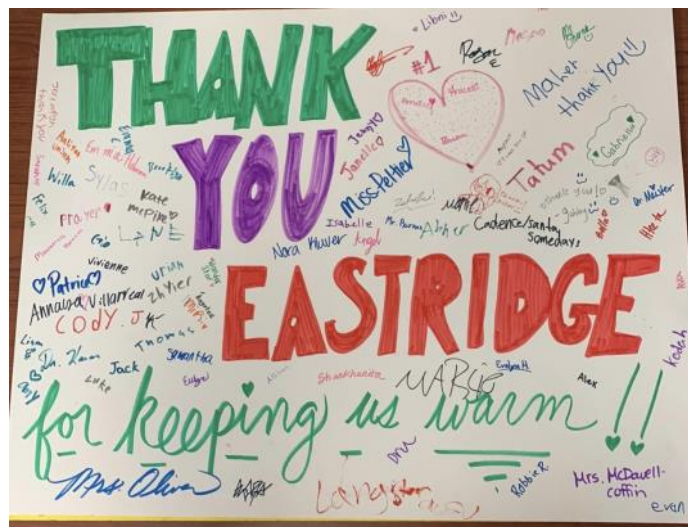
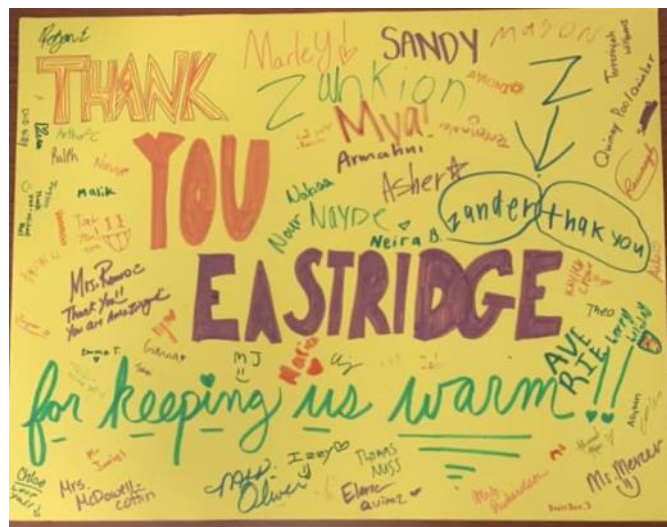
Did you know? Our church calendar is available to view online at:

[Calendar - Eastridge Presbyterian Church - Lincoln, Nebraska.](#) (link in online version).

Or you can choose "What's New" on the pull-down menus on main page.



Thank you posters from **Lefler Middle School**. "Dear Eastridge Congregation, we are so touched by the ongoing and robust care and attention that y'all spend on our little Lefler school community. Kids feel your kind regard for their basic needs and wellbeing. We as a staff are so grateful that you have been able to fill in those gaps we can't fill. Thank you. Sincerely, Lefler administration, staff, and counseling team."





We have added an option to provide treats on Sunday mornings!
Click here:

<https://bit.ly/coffeefellowship>

If you're signed up to serve coffee and would like to bring treats, please add your name to that portion of the sign up. Those of you who prefer not to sign up for coffee but would like to share treats for fellowship, please head to the sign up above. Store bought cookies, homemade goodies, whatever you want to share!



Angel Tree at Eastridge ~

Thank you for taking the Angels with wishes off the tree and returning the fulfilled wishes to be distributed. The wishes were from Clinton Elementary,

Aging Partners, Fresh Start, Presbyterian Giving, and several families.

Thank you to Anne Mulligan for 50 pairs of hand knit mittens.

Thank you to Charlene Neal for 25 Beanie Babies in sleeping bags.

Thank you to Sue and David Marx and Evan Bennett for monetary contributions.

Thank you to the volunteers for setting up the tree.

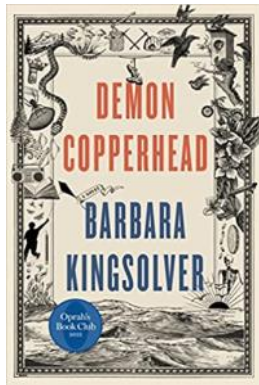
Thank you to my husband Steve Taylor for transporting the gifts to our house to organize and distribute. ~ Susan Taylor

Dear Eastridge Presbyterian Friends of Clinton: Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness, kindness and compassion for our Clinton families. Your gifts were extra special for the families. I wish you all a blessed New Year and the gift of a beautiful 2024.

~ Linda at Clinton Elementary

The EPC Book Club meets the second Monday of each month September through June at 7:00 pm in M12. A copy of the list can also be found on the church website, in the "What's New" pull-down menu, then click on "calendar".

For January: *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. Join us January 8!



Green Team is working at Eastridge: The Trustees have established a working group from among the congregation to study our energy usage at the church. The group will recommend projects to improve our energy efficiency. The goal is to reduce energy consumption, save money, and do our part to combat climate change. Members interested in joining the Green Team should contact the church office.



EASTRIDGE

Presbyterian Church



Community Action Partnership of
Lancaster and Saunders Counties

Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Church
Lincoln, NE 68510

December 27, 2023

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$500 on December 21st, 2023 to support Community Action's Gathering Place. We greatly appreciate your support as part of our annual \$1 for \$1 match campaign. This means that your contribution will go even further to address hunger in Lincoln.

Your gift inspires stories like Daniel's:

Daniel (pictured) began visiting the Gathering Place regularly a few years ago after he unexpectedly lost his job and experienced homelessness. *"Every day was different, I didn't know I'd be living on the street,"* he said.

Recently, Daniel shared with us that he has moved into stable housing and found consistent work. He explained how much it meant to him to have a balanced meal each day, connection to resources, and fellowship with other people. He still occasionally visits the Gathering Place sharing, *"This is a place where I belong."*

Your thoughtful gift is making sure that everyone in Lincoln is provided access to a hot meal. But beyond that, you are providing **Love, Joy, and Peace** to your neighbors.

Community Action is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. This letter serves as a receipt of this gift for tax purposes. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your generous donation.

Sincerely,

Heather Loughman
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you for your
loyal support.
Happy New Year!



Thank you to our sponsors!

Lead Sponsor
Acklie Charitable Foundation

NPF

Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation

Miriam Moeller Charitable Trust

UBT

Union Bank & Trust

BUKATY

COMPANIES

For the good of the community

MarshMcLennan

Agency

INSPRO

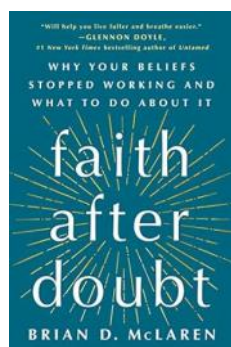
Sue Quambusch



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. Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/thegatheringplacecurrent>



Thank you to all participants in the **Eastridge Presbyterian Women Cookies Sale:** bakers, workers, and those of you who purchased cookies for this fundraiser! Special thanks to Ivy & Tim Hanson, Joe Hanson, and Megan McWilliams for all their work.



Faith After Doubt: Why Your Beliefs Stopped Working and What to Do About It by Brian D. McLaren will be our Zoom study during Lent. Watch the Lamp and February newsletter for more information!

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
 Brent Shaw.....Organist & Adult Choir Director
 Will McGuire.....Worship Leader
 Vince Ruhl.....Director of Online Ministries
 Brett Meier.....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

Devotion Ministry:

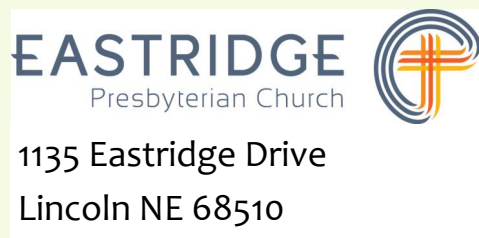
We are always looking for new writers for our online devotion ministry. If you are interested in writing, even just occasionally, please contact the office for more information. If you'd like to receive a prompt and the link five days a week via email, let the office know as well.



Are you interested in becoming a liturgist for worship? For more information, contact the office or Robin Hadfield. Current liturgists, please sign up for 2024!

<https://bit.ly/epcliturgist>





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