



Excerpts from Pastor Melodie's

Sabbatical Journey

Facebook Diary

Morning, June 24, 2024

Today is the first trip of my sabbatical - as I head to Omaha this afternoon for the Mormon Trail Museum. After spending the first four days easing into my sabbatical time, I jumped into researching my family roots. My sister has done much of the work for me, and there are even some online autobiographies and biographies of my ancestors. My mom, sister, and I spent two hours yesterday filling in the blanks on some of our stories, and asking some questions we can't answer right now.

I've also been reading Benjamin E. Park's book *American Zion* (on loan from a friend!) which has been helpful in identifying when and where and how both sides of my family joined the early Mormon church.

Today is Winter Quarters in Omaha, where remote relatives on my mother's side allegedly lost a child due to illness and severe winter weather conditions.

Evening, June 24, 2024

My visit to the Mormon Trail Center was very interesting! Our guide was lovely, and we learned a lot about the trail itself and some of the hardships and the joys of the journey.

I learned that of all the pioneer trails west, the Mormon Trail was a community effort to reach the West safely. They all took pledges to care for each other along the way, and they did. They shared knowledge, housing, food, and raised each other's children (often because of death of parents). If you were poor and could not afford the journey, they would help you reach the west safely, and then after acts of service to the community, your debt would be paid. Sometimes this led to folks becoming Mormon, traveling west, paying their debt, and leaving the community. Sometimes this meant giving and sharing of precious resources to help another. One of the foundational verses for this is my own beloved Acts 2:42, which is why the Mormon church to this day has one of the best systems for tithing/gathering resources and sharing those resources.

Morning, June 25, 2024

Left this morning in the HEAT! Just over the Iowa border it started raining and cooled off significantly! It's been a nice drive on some backroads through beautiful farmland! Am currently in Creston, IA, where my maternal great grandmother Corrine's birth was recorded. (That's a Creston water tower in the background!)



Noon, June 25, 2024

Made a turn south in central Iowa to Eagleville, MO, where my maternal great-grandfather Bill was born. It's a cute little place!



My great-grandparents met and married in a Presbyterian church in Sterling, Colorado before moving to Inkom, Idaho. He was an orphan and a farmer from MO. He lost Corrine in 1935. (Which we knew). I knew him as grandpa, but he died when I was young (he was nearly one hundred!). I think it's interesting they lived so close to each other when they were children, and then found each other in Colorado. How tragic to have lost Corrine so young during the hard years of the depression.

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Mid-Afternoon, June 25, 2025

I made two more stops following the Mormon trail before heading home. The first is Adam-ondi-Ahman, where Joseph Smith believed the American Garden of Eden to be. This is a lovely park-like area that is owned and maintained by the LDS church. It is believed to be the place where Jesus will return one day, and all the faithful will gather.



For a last stop today I went to Independence, MO, and had a lovely chat with the missionary elder (male) from Blackfoot, ID! He shared lots of information with me, and then guided a group of us through the visitor's center. He shared the ways the LDS church is also working to include those voices long silenced, including women and people of color. Then I also learned the beautiful temple across the road is actually part of the reorganized church and is not connected to the LDS church I grew up around. But it is beautiful!

Some reflections on this part of my journey, which was to better understand my family's journey west and my roots in Iowa and Nebraska:

The Mormon Trail for many people was the best chance to make it west because of their high dedication to community and caring for each other. My family was no different. My relatives who traveled on the Mormon Trail benefited from the community's oath to care for each other. They were super organized and built cities everywhere they went (even though sometimes they were only there for two or three years). Without their oath to care for each other, who knows what would have happened to my orphaned relatives. And Minnie, the person I am most intrigued by, left a difficult time in Sweden as one of the first converts for a promise of a better life.

On the way home to my beloved family, I ended up giving thanks for all those who played a role in caring for my ancestors in difficult times - poverty, losing parents, and the Great Depression.

Long posts! But closing this first two weeks of sabbatical with this chapter written. Ready for the next chapter!

July 8, 2024

After my genealogy expedition, I came back to Lincoln to run, relax, and spend time with my family! We belatedly celebrated Steve's fortieth birthday and also hosted our neighborhood Fourth of July party. It was a time of celebration and thankfulness for the community in which we live!

I also spent some time doing some grief work - the build up of over 25 years of goodbyes to saints that I hadn't dealt with in a personal level. What I discovered about my grief is

that it's different than I thought. I assumed I would be grieving for individual relationships, but I realized that it's more of a communal sense of loss for me. As I grieved, I charted out a few ways to deal with this grief in the future.

I am so very thankful for the personal relationships that I have with you all! Thank you for sharing your life and faith and love. I will still grieve with and alongside this community in ways that bring healing and gratitude.

July 13, 2024

This past week we've enjoyed time with our extended family. We had fun exploring a few sights in Seattle traveling up to Vancouver, Canada.

Tomorrow begins a few days of rest and relaxation on Whidbey Island, where we will sleep, relax, and I will eat lots of berries and fish!



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July 16, 2024

This is my view for my morning coffee from Whidbey Island. After the busy days of navigating and exploring Seattle and Vancouver, we headed for some down time on the water. It's been cool here - nearly hit 70 yesterday - and lovely. It's also crab season, so it was fresh crab, salmon, Oregon Bay shrimp, burgers, chicken and hot dogs for dinner.

July 17, 2024

A highlight of our trip has been catching up with friends that are family to us, and sharing those relationships with Steve's family. We had a great time tonight at the Seattle Sounders FC game! For many of us it was our first



Major League Soccer game. And just a great way to spend time together!

July 19, 2024

Today was the day! After more than five years of planning, I returned to my alma mater Whitworth campus. I still feel connected to my education there and loved sharing memories with the kids and my sister.



July 20, 2024

Today we slowed down a whole bunch! After a good night's sleep we went to the neighborhood farmer's market - a fan fave any time of year. This time of year is berry season - so we bought raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and loganberries. Also, my first peach of the season. This afternoon Eli and I went to the soccer pitches and had a lot of laughs as we worked on our skills!

In a while we'll be making raspberry jam. For now, though just resting, relaxing, and hanging out.





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July 21, 2024

As we prepare to return home, I must say that we are so forever grateful for these crazy, wonderful, loving people who are our family. I am thankful for my small but mighty family of origin. They love me because they have to, and I am thankful that they do! And thankful for the way they love our kids.

To have married into such an amazing family is also gift that astonishes me. I am forever thankful for the way they have embraced and welcomed me and love our children.

We're ready to go home to Steve, our friends, and our neighbors.

July 28, 2024

My sabbatical officially ended three days ago! I had a lovely catch up with Donna and Thomas, and then spent some time with Thomas for the big hand off!

Today was my first day back in worship. I did worship with other local communities, and am excited that there are so many wonderful faith communities in Lincoln. Of course, there's no place like home! How I missed my people!

Many people asked me if I felt relaxed, renewed, and re-energized. As I shared in worship this morning, I can't say that I do. I did have a lovely break, and definitely had time for the three "R's." I think really my journey was about seeking generational identity and healing generational trauma. How we tell the stories of who we are makes a difference, and I wanted to know more about those stories.

I also wanted to understand how the stories shared with me through the communities I have served have affected me. While I made space to grieve individuals and my personal relationship with them, I found healing in grieving and acknowledging the cloud

of witnesses that has surrounded me.

After a tough year for my family with the loss of Steve's grandparents and health challenges in my family, it was a gift to spend time together in one of my favorite places. I am so thankful for the opportunity to laugh, explore, and share time together!

This morning's service was all about gratitude and generosity, which is exactly how I feel about the faith community at Eastridge. I am so grateful for a faith community that has generously given this time to me and my family. A huge thank you to the session, the trustees, the staff, and my colleague, Thomas Dummermuth. There are many people who also stepped up and stepped in with pastoral care, financial oversight, and worship leadership. I am blessed to be part of this faith community!

~ Pastor Melodie

Community Art Installation:

Local artist Ann Williams will be working with our congregation over the summer on a community art project for everyone to enjoy! On this fourth collaboration with Ann, we continue with the image of a tree in a field where the community gathers. Inspired by our history as a mission church on the edge of Lincoln, we return to this place now as the place where we find food for the hungry, rest for the weary, and belonging for all. We see the handiwork of God in our own hands as we search for understanding "Today, I choose to believe..."

*This is a privately funded project, and donations are still being accepted toward painting the Food Pantry. Any donations above the cost of the art project will go toward other improvements around the outside of the Eastridge Food Pantry building or other equipment for use in the building.



Save the date!
Our Eastridge community will participate in part of the mural project on Sunday, August 11!





CALVIN CREST'S

Family Fun Day

ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Silent Auction
- ✓ Worship
- ✓ Hayrack Rides
- ✓ David Marsh- "Music Around the World"
Supported By Nebraska Humanities Council
- ✓ Arts and Crafts
- ✓ Hikes and Games
- ✓ Food & Fellowship
- ✓ Mt. Bike Skills Demos

AUGUST 24, 2024

MORE INFO

www.calvincrest.org/familyfunday



Calvin Crest Family Fun Day is August 24 this year. There is a lot in which to participate! See activities listed above.

(Please note: Eastridge members Kara Maize and her children Lucy and Willa are featured on the flyer!)



Calvin Crest Insteadium 3.0

Join us for an overnight retreat to start the school year off right.

Designed for youth groups (middle school and high school) with leaders and individuals, this short retreat will help connect you with God and others in a fun atmosphere.

The retreat starts at 4:00 pm on Saturday, August 24 (after Family Fun Day) and ends at 11:00 am on Sunday, August 25.

Cost is \$ 35/person.

Register online.



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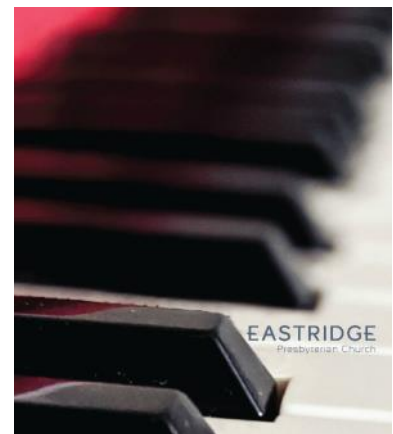
"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!" -Psalm 150

Chancel choir will resume rehearsals Wednesday September 4 at 7pm.

Kirk Ringers will resume rehearsals Tuesday September 10 at 6:30pm.

Contact Brent Shaw if interested in ringing, singing, or offering other musical gifts.

Thank you to all our church family and friends who help lead us in worship in so many different ways!





SESSION HIGHLIGHTS JUNE 2:

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of May 9, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9:30 a.m. service on June 2, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service for Morgan Oestmann on May 11, 2024, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service for Maxine Stout on May 13, 2024, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session removed Donna Gies from the member rolls, deceased May 22, 2024, and acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service on May 28, 2024, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dummermuth officiated at the memorial service for Joanna Kennedy on May 20, 2024, at Roper and Sons Funeral Chapel.

The Session approved the four-week sabbatical for Kris-Adler Brammer. She provided a proposal for the sabbatical, which will take place from July 1-31, 2024. The Personnel Committee will review the length of the sabbatical and refer any possible changes to the Session.

The Session carried a motion to approve the sale of merchandise, including shirts, hoodies, and caps, which can be ordered through the Relentless Merch website.

The Session received a letter of thanks from the PCUSA Office of Ministry and Engagement Support for the church's contribution to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.

The Rev. Dummermuth reported from the Homestead Pres-

bytery meeting that two new pastors were welcomed. The commissioners to General Assembly were commissioned. The Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation announced that its grant requests are no longer divided between churches and community organizations and that applications will be accepted from those who have previously received grants. The next presbytery meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2024, at Calvin Crest Camp and Conference Center.

The Session participated in a study of Matthew 25, which will be the focus of worship and activities in the fall.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS JULY 14:

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of June 2, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9:30 a.m. service on July 7, 2024.

The Session removed Ann Pardy from the member rolls, deceased July 2, 2024.

The Session received a report concerning plans for fall worship and activities, which will focus on Matthew 25.

A motion was carried to approve the request from Faith Partners that Narcan be made available in the church. Details as to location and other policies will be determined by Faith Partners.

Rev. Dummermuth provided a summary of actions taken at General Assembly of PCUSA.



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.



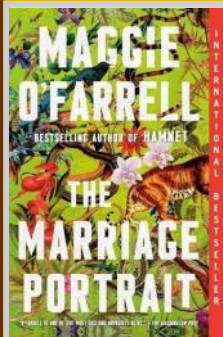
Children & Youth Faith Formation Important Dates

Just a few more weeks and a new school year will begin! We will kick-off our Faith Formation year in August. We hope you will put these important dates on your calendar!

Sunday, August 11th – Back-to-School Sunday. We will celebrate the Blessing of the Backpacks, as well as give Bibles to our 3rd Graders. Following worship, we invite you to stick around for lunch and a few fellowship activities.

Wednesday, September 4th – This will be our first youth group gathering of the year. We will meet from 6:00pm to 7:45pm this year. We will kick off our youth group year with a youth/parent evening including a potluck dinner.

Tuesday, September 10th – This will be our first Tuesday of our Afterschool Faith Formation. This program includes our Kindergartners through 5th graders. We gather after-school and meet until 5:30pm each week.



Book Club for the 2024-2025 year:

A list is available online! Head to the church website, “What’s New” pulldown menu, “Calendar”, then “Book Club”.

Our first pick in September is: *The Marriage Portrait* by Maggie O’Farrell. See you September 9! This group meets Sept.—June the second Monday of each month at 7:00 pm in M12.

As we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of our distinctive logo, we reflect the many ways it has become an identifying feature for our faith community. This summer, the session would like to make t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats available to the faith community for purchase through Relentless Merch, a local small business. There's a bit of a twist this time, with the addition of Micah 6:8 to the back of the shirt, "Do Justice. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly."

T-shirts will be available in black, gray, and white; sweatshirts in gray. More information to come on a link to purchase these items.





We need Volunteers to help with the Lefler Food Market!

In 2017 Lefler Middle School started the Lefler Food Market to serve students and families in need. Eastridge Presbyterian Church provides 3 volunteers each month to help for this once a month Food Market, on the first Wednesday of the month. The Market takes place during the school year, September-May.



We have a Sign-up Genius link if you are interested in volunteering.

Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/lefler2425>

If you would like more information about volunteering, please contact Susan Budler at sbudler1@unl.edu.

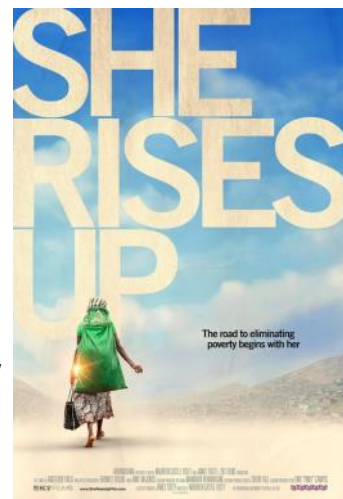
Volunteers who want to help at the Lefler Food Market will need to fill out a Level II volunteer application. Go to <https://wapp.lps.org/gold/volunteer/volunteer.cfm>, the application only takes a few minutes to fill out.

Join ECHO Collective at the movies on Sunday, August 4 at 1:00pm for a special showing of *She Rises Up* at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center.

Following the movie Executive Director Kelly Ross will moderate a panel with four local leaders of small business, including one ECHO graduate and one current ECHO coaching client.

Panelists include Eastridge member Nyabuoy Chan of Buay Cleaning Services & the Asian Community & Cultural Center.

She Rises Up reveals the implications of women's economic participation as we follow women from Sri Lanka, Peru and Senegal who are fighting to build businesses that create job opportunities for women, while also contributing to the reduction of poverty in their communities.



We're thankful for all the amazing members of our church family who do so much for others out in the Lincoln community.

Shown here is member Bill Reichert conducting a rehearsal of the Eastmont choir, several of whom are Eastridge members. (photos shared by Brent Shaw)





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>

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



EASTRIDGE FOOD PANTRY: URGENT need for volunteers!
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 Faith Partners: Look for more information soon on a workshop on grief. This workshop will be for those who have lost a loved one through suicide or unexpected, sudden loss and/or those who want to support them. Specifics to come!



Income information (general fund):
Year-to-date (July 29) \$ 276,671
Last year at this time: \$ 285,399
Please remember the church in your giving!



MEET THE STAFF

What We Believe Today: our Faith Montage.

During worship, you’ll notice post its/pens in the pews. Every week a new question will invite you to ponder. Write your answer on the post it and add to the board in the Welcome Center! We will build our faith montage over the summer.
Check it out in the Welcome Center!



THANK YOU

To Eastridge friends & family: A special thank you for the cards, calls, acts of kindness, and especially the prayers during Donna’s illness and passing. Knowing that so many were praying for her gave Donna great comfort and reassurance.
~Jim Gies family

EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



1135 Eastridge Drive
Lincoln NE 68510

