



## From the Pastor's Pen ~

It's Christmastime, again! In just a few short days, our homes, schools, businesses, and doctor's offices will be transformed into a marvelous winter wonderland of snow. The same will happen here in our building as we begin our celebrations of the season. For us, that will include Christmas trees, Christmas lights, and of course, the nativity scene.

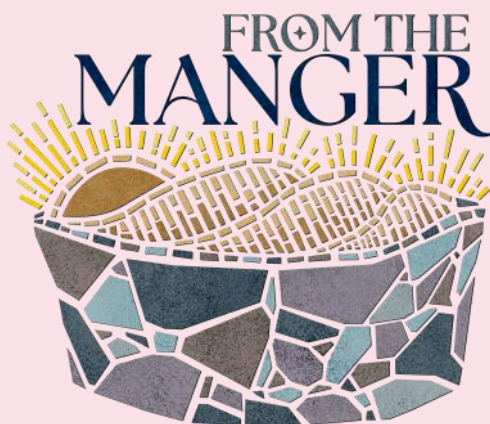
Pop quiz! What piece of the nativity do you need to make it a nativity? The angel? The shepherds? The animals? The wise ones? Joseph? Mary? The baby Jesus?

Most nativities have the baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in the manger at the center. Yes, of course, that's the answer to the question. The Oxford Online Dictionary defines nativity as "the occasion of someone's birth." Secondly, the birth of Jesus Christ. A third definition is "a picture, carving, or model representing Jesus' birth."

This year, our Advent and Christmas theme goes right to the center of the nativity. Yes, I mean the birth of Jesus Christ as represented in the nativities that decorate our homes. Placed at the center is the manger, a common feeding trough for animals.

Nebraska is farm country. We may be known for our beef, but I imagine many of us have experience with feeding troughs for cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, llamas, or chickens. Maybe you also have memories of visits to one of our amazing zoos around feeding time. Maybe you

have a beloved pet member of your family and can look at pet food bowls. Choose whichever one of these you like, and then answer this question - who would place a baby in a feeding trough for animals? It's not very practical, really. Until you remember the story of a young couple, about to have a baby, on a journey to fulfill a government requirement and be counted in the census. Nowhere to sleep, even the inn is full. Nowhere to place the newborn baby.



This new young couple wraps their newborn baby in swaddling clothes, and lays him in a manger, because there is no room for them in the inn. In his very first moments of life, the Christ child is placed in a feeding trough, a foreshadowing of the one who would proclaim, "I am the bread of life" in John 6:35. Author and scholar Amy-Jill Levine writes, "The term manger is not just a bed of straw; it is a feeding trough.... Mary places her baby where food is found; how appropriate, for this baby will later take 'the bread . . . saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me' (22:19)... More,

the name Bethlehem literally means 'house of bread.'" She continues later, "We should remember the manger in Bethlehem not only at the Last Supper but also in connection to all the passages where Jesus shares a meal with others. Luke depicts the feeding of the five thousand, meals with tax collectors and sinners including Zacchaeus, the three meals with Pharisees, the dinner at Emmaus, and the final meal of broiled fish. Reading Luke should make one hungry, not just for bread, but for more of the story."

This Advent we will jump right into the birth narrative and explore what it means for Jesus to be placed in a manger in a town named "House of Bread." With Christmas and Advent Carol every week, special music every week, and bread eaten around tables every week, we will attend to those manger stories of hunger, thirst, and feasting in Luke's Gospel.

After all, as Jeehei Park, professor of New Testament at Seminary of the Southwest writes, "The manger is where Jesus descends to the lowest place in the world, while at the same time, bonds with his mother on a night of joy and relief, exhaustion and uncertainty."

Come and worship this Advent season, for all has been made ready.

~ Pastor Melodie

Levine, Amy-Jill. *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent* (p. 87). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

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## Join us this Advent at Eastridge Presbyterian Church!

- ◆ Sunday Worship at 9:30 am followed by food for the journey and the soul!
- ◆ December 1 - homemade quick breads, coloring, and conversation
- ◆ December 8 - savory breads, stuffing stockings for the Gathering Place, and the EPW Cookie Sale
- ◆ December 15 - charcuterie boards and Christmas carols
- ◆ December 22 - warm homemade breads and jams
- ◆ Special Christmas Music every week by our choirs, musicians, and congregation
- ◆ Tuesday lunch devotion and meal on Zoom at 12:15 pm with Pastors Thomas and Melodie (see more info on the Tuesday Zoom on the last page of this newsletter)

# FROM THE MANGER



## 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 16. 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 \$13.00 each Total \_\_\_\_\_

I wish my Poinsettia to be taken to a church member. \_\_\_\_\_

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







## When Did We See You... EPC Youth Style

(continued from previous page)

### I love \_\_\_\_\_ about my church:

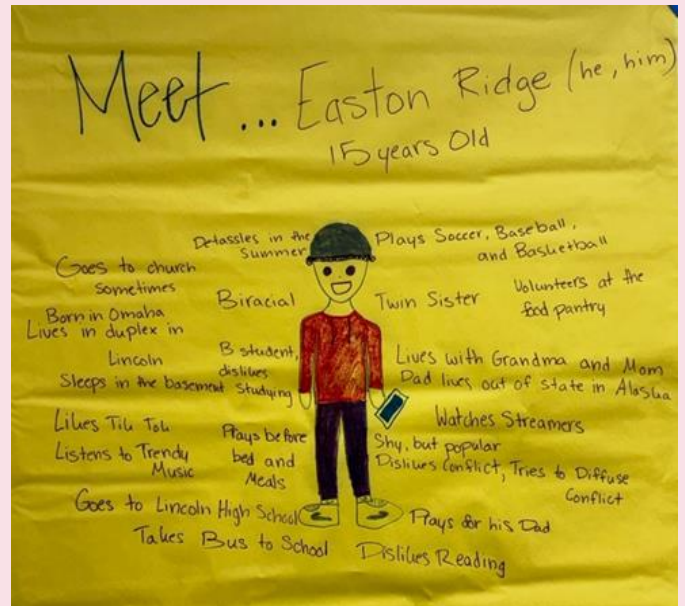
- Everything! (said by MULTIPLE youth).
- The community.
- The people.
- The community and events we do.

### What I wish my church would do:

- More things geared for everyone.
- Take notes.
- More including us when planning events.
- More social events.
- Bring us together like lunches after church.
- Bring each other together as much as possible.

Our young people are on the ball! They are an active part of TODAY'S church. I hope this will give you a small

sense of where they are and give you a starting point to have a conversation with them. They want to be part of the community! They are just interested in having people understand them and meet them where THEY are. Challenge given EPC!

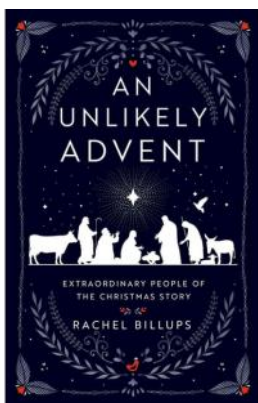


## Eastridge Presbyterian Women Cookie Sale is December 8!

This is an annual fundraiser for the mission projects chosen by EPW.

Ladies, you may drop off your cookies on Saturday December 7 from 2-4pm or the morning of the sale.

Join us that Sunday following worship to purchase cookies for holiday entertaining!

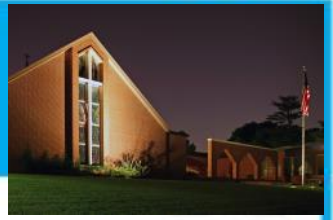


STUDIES AT EASTRIDGE: The Wednesday morning Bible study will be reading "An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story" starting November 27.

For more information about this and other groups that meet at Eastridge, contact the church office:

office@eastridge.org or 402-488-7844





## Eastridge is sponsoring a Blood Drive!

Please consider donating blood on Tuesday, December 10

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM in Huxtable Lounge

In only 30 minutes you can help save a life!

Schedule a Blood, Platelet or Plasma Donation | American Red Cross (redcrossblood.org)



**PER CAPITA:** Per Capita is a term the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) uses for individual contributions that go to fund the denomination as a whole; a portion of this funding goes to the General Assembly, another portion goes to our Synod, and the balance goes to our Presbytery. For 2024 the assessed Per Capita is \$37.50 per member of Eastridge. However, if you are so called, a gift of \$100 will help us cover our denominational funding obligations and assist those who may not be able to contribute towards this obligation.



## What we're listening to this Advent and Christmas

These are some of the songs Pastors Melodie and Thomas are listening to this season:

- Why Does God Have to Look so Human by Waterdeep
- Where Jesus Was by The Many
- Joy to the World by Aretha Franklin
- Go Tell It On The Mountain by The Golden Gospel
- O Come All Ye Faithful by Third Day
- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing by Darius Rucker

What a Glorious Night by Sidewalk Prophets

Silent Night by Gabby Barrett

O Holy Night by RAYE

Albums: Prepare Him Room: Celebrating the Birth of Jesus and Heaven Has Come, both by Sovereign Grace

**Here's a bit.ly and a QR code of the current playlist:**

<https://apple.co/4eFeb79>



During our worship services this fall we've heard a number of new songs! Great news! They're available on most music streaming platforms as well as Youtube.

An Instrument of Your Peace by The Porter's Gate (on Justice Songs 2020)

Let Us Be Known by The Porter's Gate (on Neighbor Songs 2019)

He is Among Us (The Least of These) by Porter's Gate (on Neighbor Songs 2019)

Waymaker by Leeland (single)

Come, All Who Are Weary by The Porter's Gate (on Sanctuary 2023)

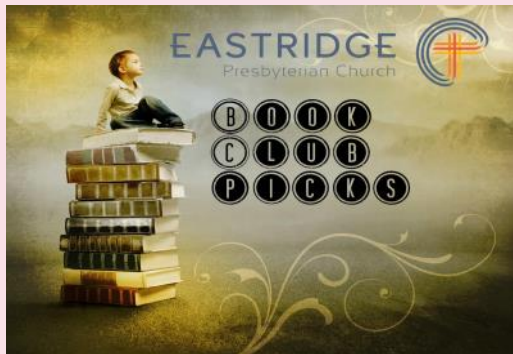
Goodness of God by Cece Winans (Live version)

Youtube only:

Jesus, Be with Us by David Gambrell, sung by Phillip Morgan

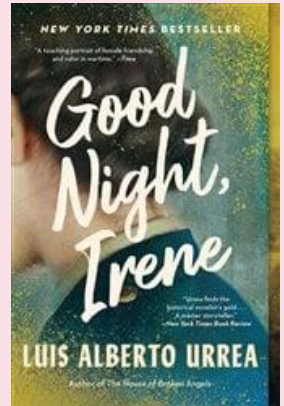
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQoVjFWYc-k>





The **EPC Book Club** meets the second Monday of each month September through June at 7:00 pm. Locations vary...check the Welcome Center for info when you arrive!

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".



Our selection at right, **Good Night, Irene by Luis Alberto Urrea** is our pick for January. Join us January 13 at 7:00 pm in M12 for discussion and refreshments.



Save the date! **A Confirmation Retreat is on the calendar for March 1 at Calvin Crest.**

save the date

There was an informational meeting on November 20 for parents and caregivers, call the office if you missed it!



**Calendar fundraiser:** By purchasing a 2025 nature/wildlife calendar you'll be helping out two valuable EPC ministries. A sign up is available at the Welcome Desk. Checks payable to West Door Studios for \$ 30, checks can be left in the office inbox. If paying via Venmo, account info listed on the sign up, and here. **This year the calendar will benefit both Children's Ministries and Music Ministries at Eastridge.**



**It's back!** Join us as we travel along the Sunrise Road! Our podcast guests this fall include Beth Graverholt and Olivia Butts with Justice in Action; Sharon Kandel, PC(USA) Regional Liaison for the Horn of Africa; Michaela Kumke, President and CEO of the Food Bank of Lincoln; Lisa Janssen, Program Administrator at the Gathering Place; Melissa Ripley, LPD, and Tut Kalee.

The Sunrise Road can be found on the Sunrise Road YouTube channel (@sunriseroad) and all major podcast platforms.



Pledge cards and stewardship letters have gone out in the mail! The estimated giving card (pledge card) will help us formulate a budget for 2025. We encourage you to discuss and pray over your giving before filling out the card and returning it to the office by December 3 (you may also leave in the offering plate). Pledge cards also available at the welcome desk!





## GROUPS THAT MEET AT EASTRIDGE:

Eastridge is grateful that several groups continue to find a home in our building. We love this space and continuously strive to make it a place where everyone feels welcome, loved, and valued. Their presence in our building is an important part of who we want to be in our community!



This fall, we are asking the question, **"What do you wish we knew about you?"** and sharing those answers (words and pictures) in this and upcoming newsletters (and possibly on our Welcome Center screens).

**P.E.O. Chapter HE** is grateful for the opportunity to hold our meetings in M12 at Eastridge Presbyterian Church. The ample parking, easy access, warmth and concern for our meeting needs is greatly appreciated.

*What do we wish you knew about P.E.O.:*

Besides our relationships and socialization among chapter members, our International Sisterhood is purposeful about our mission. We support women in the United States, Canada, and around the world, in varying walks of life, to achieve their educational goals by providing loans, grants and scholarships.

In addition to these educational philanthropies, P.E.O. owns Cottey College, a four-year liberal arts college for women in Nevada, Missouri. The Nebraska P.E.O. State Chapter owns and operates a retirement home in Beatrice, Nebraska that is open to P.E.O. members and family. An especially exciting part of our 2023-2024 year, Chapter HE sponsored Hope Shortridge for a P.E.O. STAR Scholarship (photo). We were thrilled to learn she was the recipient of a \$2,500 scholarship which recognizes the accomplishments of a graduating high school woman planning to pursue post-secondary education, who has demonstrated excellence in leadership, extracurricular activities, community service, academics and potential for success.

Eastridge members, JoAnne Bateman, Deb Reichart, and Deb Merritt are a part of Chapter HE and are proud that Eastridge welcomes groups like ours to use the church's facilities.



## EPC FOOD PANTRY December 1 FOOD DRIVE: The

**Lincoln Food Bank** is able to supply us with basic canned goods, etc., so it would be nice to add holiday baking supplies such as sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, shortening, oil cocoa powder, chocolate chips. Hot chocolate mixes, pie filling, graham cracker crusts, cookie and cake mixes, gingerbread house or cookie kits are popular. Boxed potatoes, stuffings and gravy or mixes are good ideas as well.





## HIGHLIGHTS



### SESSION HIGHLIGHTS: NOVEMBER 2024

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of October 13, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9:30 a.m. service on November 3, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the memorial service of Lois Coleman on

November 1, 2024, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session removed Russell Brauer from the member rolls, deceased November 1, 2024.

The Session acknowledged the elder status of Lois Coleman (ordination date of January 16, 2005) and Clinton Philson (ordination date of January 28, 1968).

The Session affirmed the email vote to approve the report of the Confirmation Task Force. The task force recommended that "Changing the World: Confirmation for the Missional Church," be used as the curriculum, that an informational meeting be held for parents and caretakers of prospective confirmands, and that confirmation include confirmands who are in eighth grade or older.

The Session approved the wedding of Eliza Felix and Benjamin Amen on August 15, 2025.

The Session approved the sale of calendars made by Donna Gustafson as a fundraiser for the music and youth programs.

The Session approved motions from the Personnel Committee 1) to increase payroll by 3 percent, if the way be clear, 2) to amend the contract of Kris Adler Brammer to include a six-week sabbatical after five years of service, and 3) to pay Brent Shaw as summer music coordinator.

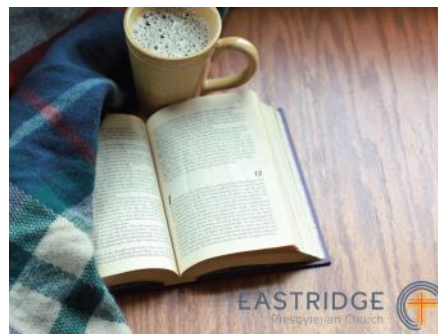
The Session approved the pastors' terms of call which will be presented to the congregation at the congregational meeting on November 24, 2024.

The Session heard a report from a meeting with the church's investment manager from Union Bank and Trust.

The Session heard a report from the Nominating Committee for nominees who will be presented to the congregation at the congregational meeting on November 24, 2024.

### 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.



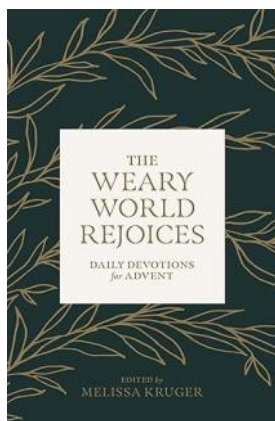




**Eastridge Care Connections:** if you missed the October meeting and are still interested in participating in this Eastridge ministry, you may fill out one of the cards at the Welcome Desk or usher table, or you may contact the church office.

## Interested in ushering?

We need ushers in 2025! Please let the office know if you would like to be a part of this ministry.



## Monday Night Bible Study group:

An Advent Study will begin Monday, November 25: they will be studying Kate Bowler's "*The Weary World Rejoices*". There is a group study and individual daily devotional. After Advent the group will start Kelly Minter's "*No Other Gods*".

If you would like more information on this study or other studies offered at Eastridge, please contact the church office at:

[office@eastridge.org](mailto:office@eastridge.org)

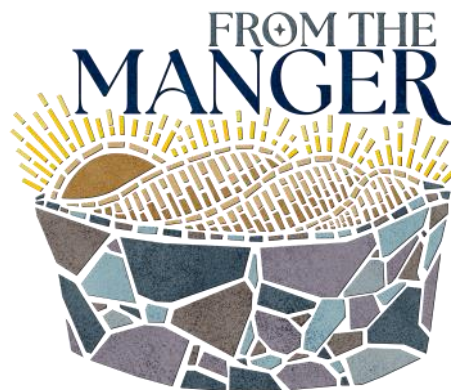
OR

402-488-7844

## ADVENT CALENDARS

The "From the Manger" Advent series we will be working through this Advent season has several pieces to it that will help families observe the season. One of those is an Advent Calendar. This will be a great tool for our families with children and youth. We have a calendar for each family.

We have already started to hand them out. If you have not received a calendar and would like one, you can pick one up at the Welcome Desk.



For those of you who purchased tickets\*, we're looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming LCP musical, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* on **December 8 at 2:00 pm.**

If you did not purchase tickets through the church, you can still attend this production by finding tickets online or by calling the box office. More information on the website:

[Lincoln Community Playhouse](http://LincolnCommunityPlayhouse)

\*check your email next week for more info on picking up your tickets.



## THANKS FOR GIVING

Thank you for your gifts in 2024! Help us reach our end of year giving goal of \$ 550,000. We are currently at \$ 409,522 in general fund giving in 2024 (November 21). Thank you for giving to the ministries of Eastridge Presbyterian Church!

**Trailblazers** is a group of older adults at Eastridge that provides an opportunity for men and women, singles as well as couples, to participate together in the life of the church—in service and fellowship. We usually meet the third Friday night of the month, September through May. If you are interested, please contact the church office.



**Trailblazers for December: White Elephant gift exchange on December 13.** Check your yearbook for more information!

### Angel Tree at Eastridge~Holiday Giving 2024

Keep your eyes open for the annual angel gift tree appearing in the Welcome Center on November 10! This year we will be sharing gift cards with neighbors residing at Fresh Start in Lincoln. Gift cards provide the women in the Fresh Start community with opportunities to make personal choices that reflect their own wishes and preferences—something most of us also appreciate and enjoy.

**To participate in sharing the spirit of the season in this way:**

- \*Take one or more envelopes from the tree.
- \*Place a gift card (\$25 is the suggested amount) in the envelope and seal it with the sticker you'll find inside.
- \*On the envelope, fill in the business where the card may be used and the amount of the gift card, if different than \$25.
- \*Return the envelope to the black mailbox beside the

office door on or before December 8.

Some favorite places to patronize shared by women at Fresh Start include Walmart, Target, gas stations, Bath and Body Works, Starbucks, and fast food restaurants (Burger King, Amigos or McDonald's.)

**Thank you for reaching out with love and compassion to our neighbors at Fresh Start.**



### BETHLEHEM PEACE LIGHT:

Eastridge Presbyterian Church has distributed the Bethlehem Peace light each year for the past few years. More information to come on this advent ministry!







**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](mailto:mjonespointon@eastridge.org)  
Thomas Dummermuth: [tdummermuth@eastridge.org](mailto:tdummermuth@eastridge.org)



**EASTRIDGE FOOD PANTRY:**  
Links for volunteers for Sunday drive thru and Wednesday distribu-

tion plus box prep below:  
Distribution: <https://bit.ly/FPDistFood>  
Filling boxes: <https://bit.ly/FPFillingBoxes>

## MEET THE STAFF

**ADVENT DEVOTION & MEDITATION:**  
Pastors Melodie & Thomas will be doing a weekly lunchtime zoom devotion/meditation/communion service. It will be at 12:15pm on Tuesdays, starting December 3. Link here for zoom:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82521540396?pwd=IcanQXbARDMJn1vB5rfbVpBk4aGwwH.1>



**EASTRIDGE**  
Presbyterian Church



1135 Eastridge Drive  
Lincoln NE 68510



**December**

