



From the Pastor's Pen ~

Over the past two months, our series on what it means to be a Matthew 25 congregation has studied the Biblical passage and its call to see Jesus in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. We've invited a number of our community partners to share with us in worship. We've followed up with conversations on the Sunrise Road podcast. Now we make the turn from studying the passage to identifying how to live out what it means to be a Matthew 25 congregation.

We became a Matthew 25 congregation in December of 2019. Our outreach committee studied the passage as well as the resources provided by the PC(USA). Those resources outline three ways to approach this call: to embrace congregational vitality, to commit ourselves to dismantling structural racism, and to commit ourselves to eradicating systemic poverty. The denominational resource, "Bringing Matthew 25 Into Focus" says this, "Matthew 25:31-46 sets down a general rule: Those in deep human need are to be cared for. How those needs are specifically identified, and what form that care takes, is to be determined by the use of "prudence," and "prudence" is one element of careful, faithful discernment."

The denominational Bible study on Matthew 25 explains the three foci:

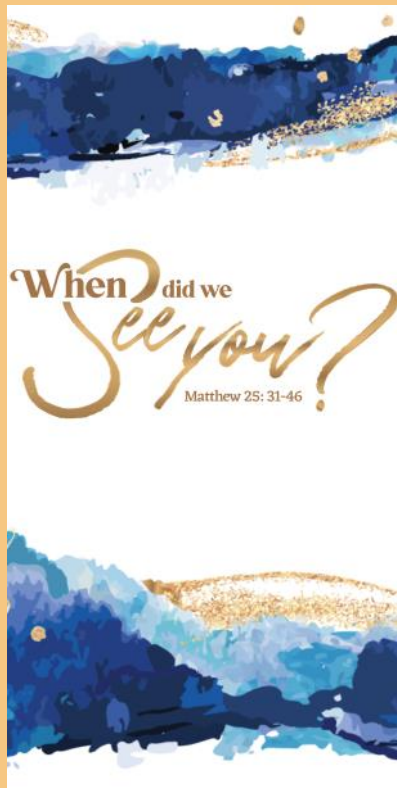
Engaging vital communities:

"Building congregational vitality refers to the intentional and continuous faith development of pastors and members of a congregation that leads disciples who are members in a church to actively engage with their community. Congregational vitality is not determined by the size of a church or its budget, but by a church's faithfulness in demonstrating the love and justice of Jesus. One good test of a congregation's vitality is to see how

its members and neighbors answer the question, "If this church were to close, who would miss it and why?" When a congregation is committed to the work and witness of Jesus Christ, its mission becomes an essential part of the local community."

Dismantling systemic racism:

"Dismantling structural racism involves breaking down the laws, policies, practices and structures that reinforce and perpetuate discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of "people of color."



The PC(USA) aligns itself in this work with the teaching of Jesus to love one's neighbor as oneself and to respond to the least of these — people who are marginalized and brushed aside — with compassion and justice. We follow the example of the early Christians, who sought to build new forms of community in which there was no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female (Galatians 3:28)."

Eradicating systemic poverty:

"Eradicating systemic poverty refers to the elimination of the economic exploitation of impoverished people through laws, policies, practices and systems that perpetuate an impoverished state. Eradicating systemic poverty means confronting the systems that create and perpetuate poverty. This area of focus moves beyond the important acts of compassion listed in Matthew 25 — offering compassion

to individuals who are hungry and thirsty — to address the factors that cause such outcomes for large groups in our society and world."

As we have connected with our community partners in worship over the past two months, I have been humbled by what we do together as a community. I have also been overwhelmed by what so many of us have individually given of our time and talents. This past Sunday, I shared some of the ways our members have shared mustard seeds of God's love for us in Jesus Christ:

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*The pew friend who takes a bulletin back to their retirement community every week and sits with a friend who is no longer able to attend in person.

*The prayer shawl, lovingly stitched into a quilt, intercepted in the mail by a person who really needed it, and says, "I can't believe someone would make such a beautiful quilt for someone else! Someone who doesn't even go to your church!"

*The director of a local non-profit who exclaims, "Your congregation is involved in everything good in town!"

*The college student, who finds themselves homesick while home on break, and so thinks, "I can go to the church!"

*The child who asks their parents to take them to church.

*The yoga instructor who is building community in every class.

*The 110 children in the building every weekday.

*The food pantry client who takes cans of peas and turns them into delicious biryani for the workers.

*The teenager who texts a youth mentor while standing at the washing machine, asking for laundry advice.

*The Bible study who shares prayer requests, and yes, beliefs and opinions, even knowing they are not shared by everyone else in the study.

I then asked the question, "If our church closed its doors tomorrow, what would you miss? What would the community around us miss? What would the world miss?"

Some of you shared your answers:

*My faith family.

*My Bible study group.

*Everything. Just everything. Everyone here. The music. The message. Everything.

Friends, what a blessing it is to be able to share our faith together in this place at this time. I am so very thankful for you.
~ Melodie

A Congregational Commitment to God and Each Other

Gathering God, you knit your people together in the body of Christ and form congregations to do your good work. Be present in our feasting and praying and our worship and service, so that this community reflects your abundance and desire for the church on earth today and always.

We give thanks for the unique stories and talents of this community. The church is a living organism, and we give thanks for those whose faith and commitment adds value and energy to who we are as a congregation.

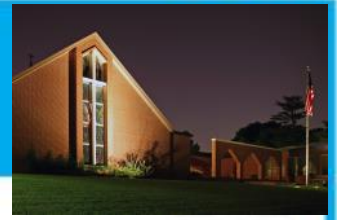
We promise to welcome each other's faith as it flows through life's joy and challenges. We desire for this church to be a safe place where all can show up as their true self and be received with love and grace.

Faith is a team sport, and we are in this together. In this community, we choose curiosity over certainty, and strive to honor each other's faith expressions and life experiences with respect and love.

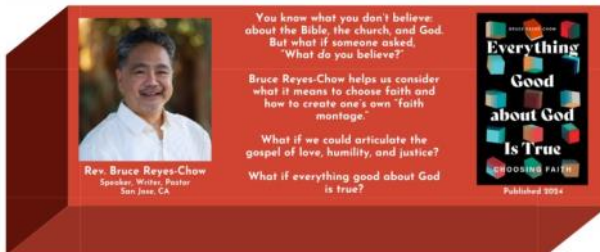
We also acknowledge that we will fail you and each other. This congregation will both embrace and resist change. Sometimes we will disagree and make mistakes. So we commit, on this side of disappointment, to promise to stick around for the healing that surely comes. Because if we go before the listening and the mending, we will miss the holy thing about being the church: the dying and the rising, the forgiving and the living.

We are members of this congregation, inspired and invested in the ministry we all share. We are beloved, and each one of us is a gift! May God bless these relationships and our common call as agents of God's mercy and the abundance the world needs! Let it be so. Amen.

Adapted from the prayer For New Members by Carlson, Meta Herrick. Found in *Speak It Plain: Words for Worship and Life Together* (p. 169). Fortress Press. Kindle Edition.



Saying What We Believe: Everything Good about God Is True



You know what you don't believe about the Bible, the church, and God. But what if someone asked, "What do you believe?"

Bruce Reyes-Chow helps us consider what it means to choose faith and how to create one's own "faith montage."

What if we could articulate the gospel of love, humility, and justice? What if everything good about God is true?

Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow
Speaker, Writer, Pastor
San Jose, CA

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Keynote Event featuring Rev. Reyes-Chow
9:30am - Registration
10:00-2:00pm, Keynotes, Q&A, and Lunch

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

9:30am - Worship at Westminster
Rev. Reyes-Chow Preaching
10:45am - Education Hour: Faith Montages & Everyday Conversations



Saying What We Believe: *Everything Good about God is True*

Westminster Presbyterian Church is hosting our friend Bruce Reyes-Chow on Saturday, November 9 and Sunday, November 10.

On Saturday, the event will run from 10:00 am—2:00 pm. Keynote, Q & A, Lunch. Registration at 9:30 am

On Sunday, Bruce will preach during worship and participate in an education hour following.

For more information:
www.westminsterlincoln.org



Advent Fellowship Activity:

Lincoln Community Playhouse will be reserving a block of 25 seats for Eastridge members for the Sunday, December 8th performance of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical*.

LCP will need a final count **by Friday, November 22**, so please let us know if you would like to attend by turning in your ticket payment (\$13 per person) by **Thursday, November 21**. The tickets are payable to EPC.

Scholarships are available. Please contact a pastor for more info.

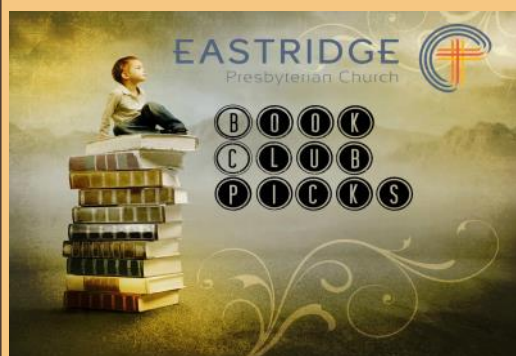


Join us for a Gratitude Meal!

Bring a side that shares something you're grateful for! Whether it's your family's favorite holiday recipe, takeout from your favorite restaurant, some of your garden harvest, or something from the grocery store.

Join us on **November 10** following worship in the Roeske Fellowship Hall. Turkey is provided!





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 is at right, *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life* by Dacher Keltner. Join us November 11 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

For more information, please contact the church office. There is an informational meeting on November 20 for parents and caregivers.



FUND MATCH:

For the FIFTH year in a row we have been given a matching gift of \$10,000 through a generous anonymous donor! We are thankful for this generous gift as we enter the season of gratitude, as it encourages giving to the mission and ministry of Eastridge. **We are at \$ 11,215 toward the match! Thank you for your gifts to 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 November 17 (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. is an organization that promotes educational opportunities for women. Our chapter raises funds to provide scholarships, loans, and grants to worthy individuals ranging from high school seniors to women completing studies at the doctoral level.

Chapter FG was organized in 1949 and our members range eight decades in age, including women with varying degrees of mobility. We are grateful that the large, accessible, and centrally located space at Eastridge Presbyterian Church allows for more active participation by all members, both old and young.

Thank you for allowing us to meet monthly in the Huxtable Lounge. The welcoming space offers us an opportunity to motivate, educate, and celebrate women.

P.E.O. Chapter FG

P.S. The photo shows a few members observing our 75th birthday by dressing in clothing from the 70's.



FROM THE EPC FOOD PANTRY: 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.

When considering what to donate, any special item that your own family enjoys for the holidays.





Ten Thousand Villages Holiday Pop-Up Sale:

The Youth Group will again host the Ten Thousand Villages Pop-Up Sale in the Welcome Center. We will also add an in-store shopping hours on Sunday afternoon where you can shop the entire store. Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 17 – Tuesday, November 19.



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.



The **November Congregational Meeting** will be Sunday, November 24, following worship. At this meeting we will nominate and elect church officers as well as approve pastor's terms of call.



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>



EASTRIDGE
FOOD PANTRY

EASTRIDGE 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>

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

HIGHLIGHTS



**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS:
OCTOBER 13, 2024**

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of September 8, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9:30 a.m. service on October 6, 2024.

The Session removed Dale Ruhl from the member rolls, deceased September 25, 2024, and acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service on October 7, 2024, at Lincoln Memorial Funeral Home.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the wedding of Holly Bingham and Isaac Ingwersen on October 7, 2024, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session affirmed the email vote to approve a special offering for the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program.

The Session acknowledged Lisa Guill as an affiliate member.

The Session approved a motion to have Christmas Eve services at 5 p.m. (family service with children’s Christmas play) and at 7 p.m. (candlelight service with choirs).

The Session approved a motion to allow a youth fundraiser which will offer items from 10,000 Villages.

The Session approved a motion to establish a task force to develop a plan for confirmation class this year.

The Session heard a report from the conveners for the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany season, and for January and February 2025.

The Session approved the serving of communion each Sunday during Advent and on Christmas Eve.

The Session approved an intergenerational fellowship event at the Lincoln Community Playhouse for “The Best Christmas Musical Ever”, and to provide scholarships for anyone who asks.

EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



1135 Eastridge Drive
Lincoln NE 68510

