



## From the Pastor's Pen:

I am one of those people who have long loved that Jesus was a teacher who told stories. Maybe because it takes me back to the days of my early childhood, sitting on my preschool teacher's knee (she was also my aunt - the rest of the class sat on the floor), listening to her read a story before naptime. I continued to love teachers that told stories to teach a lesson, which may be why I was drawn to study history. (Not the memorize-the-dates kind of history, but a learn-the-stories-of-the-individuals kind of history.) My best score in a math class was in college, when the professor used real life story problems from his apple orchard to teach the class how to solve equations.

So it's always made sense to me that in the middle of a crowd, on a hillside, at a table, with friends, strangers, adversaries, and family Jesus would tell a story. We call them parables.

Parables aren't just stories, though. And they're more than stories with a point. Parables are like gems with many facets that can be studied and interpreted in many different ways. Let's take that a step further even, as we consider the revelatory ability of parables. In his book, *Proclaiming the Parables*, scholar Tom Long says, "All of Jesus' parables, implicitly or explicitly, say, "The kingdom of God is like this." To wrestle with a parable is to be guided (or pushed) to the brink of mystery, to those places in life where God's reign is revealed." Jesus's parables make a claim about who God is, what God is like, and invite us to experience the Kingdom of God. Using ordinary events, people, and objects, these stories reveal God's character and invite us to experience the coming Kingdom.

As we continue through this sermon series in February, we'll also be welcoming the participation of children and youth in this experience of the reign of God. This, too, speaks to the power of the parable. Stories draw us in. It's hard to resist a good story. Again, this is how the gem continues to be turned as we realize that the simplest lesson and the complex lesson can both be true! Neither lesson, though, when it comes to the parables is as important as experiencing for just a moment what the Kingdom of God is like. "What is the kingdom? Well, it's like a man who had two sons, it's like a woman mixing yeast into flour." We have an image in our mind of a man with two sons, we can smell the yeasted flour as it bakes in the oven and is transformed into bread. We experience the Kingdom through these everyday scenarios that are all around us.

Long wants to say that we are changed by the parables, just as Jesus's hearers were. Another mystery, as some are changed and some are not. Some hear stories that are a nice transition to naptime, and some come away understanding something they could never put into words.

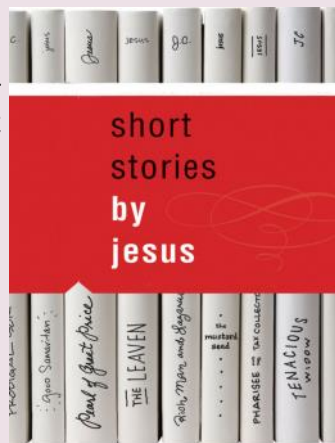
Unless they told a parable.

*Blessings,*

*Melodie*

Long, Thomas G.. *Proclaiming the Parables: Preaching and Teaching the Kingdom of God.* (Function). Kindle Edition

Ibid.



## Sermon series



## Faith Connection for Youth:

During the month of February, the EPC youth will be participating in worship in different ways. You will see them interpreting scripture, ushering, greeting, sharing fellowship opportunities, hosting an offering, etc. We hope that you will join us to share in worship together. In addition to these things, the youth will also be hosting the Souper Bowl of Caring offering on February 9th. This is an offering that started decades ago to help feed those who are food insecure.



As the youth began preparing for worship for the next few weeks, they decided to use the themes of the scripture stories to decide who will be the recipients of the Souper Bowl of Caring offering. We will divide the offering in two ways. The first part of our offering will go to

the Eastridge Food Pantry. We would like to ask folks to bring Dawn dish soap. While there are many brands of dish soap, Dawn is a favorite and we would like to stock the shelves with this brand specifically. The second part of our offering will go to some of our agencies around Lincoln that provide folks a space to shower. Some of these agencies charge a small fee and we can support this service by providing funds for shower vouchers. These shower vouchers are around \$4-\$5.

We want YOU to help us predict the Souper Bowl winner again this year! If you think the Chiefs will win, we invite you to bring Dawn dish soap. If you NEED (J) the Eagles to win, we invite you to bring \$4 for a shower voucher. And, in the spirit of Souper Bowl Sunday, we invite you wear your gear from your favorite team! We hope to see you EACH Sunday in February!

Join us for the **Faith Coalition of Lancaster County's** February meeting, featuring Carly Woythaler-Runestad, MHA, Executive Director of the Mourning Hope Grief Center.

**Wednesday, February 12 | 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM in Huxtable Lounge.** In-Person or Online Participation: If you're attending in person, please bring your own brown bag lunch. For those joining remotely, Zoom access is available. Please PM us to receive the link.



**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.



**Sign up to provide a meal for our youth!** Each Wednesday evening, youth group begins with a meal. Providing a meal includes a main dish, side(s), and dessert. The church provides drinks and all the paper products. This year the group will consist of about 12 people.

Link is here: <https://bit.ly/youthmeal2425>





## LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults.

You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to those who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- Understand how to interact with a person in crisis.
- Know how to connect a person with help.
- Use self-care tools and techniques.

**Eastridge Faith Partners**

**is hosting this event!**

**Sign up here:**

<https://bit.ly/mhfaeastridge>

**More information on  
the sign up at the Wel-  
come Desk.**

For more information, visit  
[MHFA.org](http://MHFA.org)

**EASTRIDGE**  
Presbyterian Church

**Mental Health  
First Aid**

March 16 & 23,  
11:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Eastridge Presbyterian  
Church

Eastridge Faith Partners and Teri Effle (our liaison with Region V Systems) would like to share some links to information on **Seasonal Affective Disorder**.

[https://blogs.chihealth.com/winter-blues-therapist-guide-to-sad?cmp=FY25\\_DIV\\_NL\\_CHI\\_CERG\\_CENI\\_ALNI\\_CHIHL\\_MSL\\_NSP\\_-Newsletter-202501](https://blogs.chihealth.com/winter-blues-therapist-guide-to-sad?cmp=FY25_DIV_NL_CHI_CERG_CENI_ALNI_CHIHL_MSL_NSP_-Newsletter-202501)

There is a PDF you can download here:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>





**TEN years of Wednesday morning Bible Study!** The Wednesday morning Bible study will be celebrating ten years of fellowship and learning in February! Shown below are a sampling of the studies we've done.

TEN years of Wednesday morning Bible study!



**Red Cross Blood Drive: Eastridge is sponsoring another drive!**

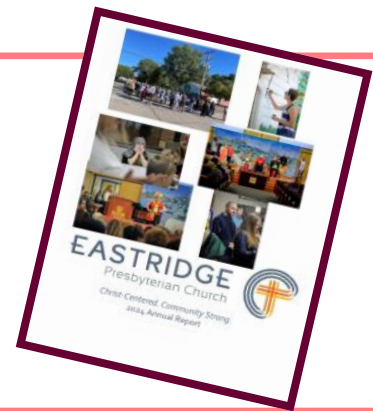
Please consider donating blood on Thursday, February 20, 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM in Huxtable Lounge. In only 30 minutes you can help save a life!

Schedule a Blood, Platelet or Plasma Donation. Click here: [rcblood.org/4g8IB3w](http://rcblood.org/4g8IB3w)

The **Eastridge 2024 Annual Report** is complete! Thank you to those of you who contributed to the report.

Short versions of the report are available at the Welcome Desk and online.

Full version is available via email and was sent out via Constant Contact.



The **Wednesday Morning Bible study** group is starting *Finding God Faithful: A study on the life of Joseph* by Kelly Minter on Wednesday, February 5.

For more info on this group and others, contact the church office.



### Ladies Night Out Brunch at Carmela's Bistro

Sunday, February 23  
following worship  
(around 11:00 am)

### Ladies Night Out Brunch at Carmela's Bistro:

Join us Sunday, February 23 following worship (around 11:00 am) at Carmela's Bistro for brunch and fellowship!

Call the office or respond to the Facebook event so that we know how many to expect. Questions, please contact the church office or send a message/post in the event online.

CHANGING THE WORLD  
CONFIRMATION FOR THE MESSIAH CHURCH



Save the date!

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

For more information, please contact the church office.

**The Green Team** is excited to announce our 2025 strategy!

The team has identified nine potential projects so far including: solar panel, EV charger, and heat pump installation; old window replacement; continued light fixture, LED light, and timer/motion sensor installation; basement stove replacement; and critical electrical and technology infrastructure upgrades. Stay tuned as the team works to accomplish their goals - and please join us if you are interested in assisting!



### COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:

Want to sign up to serve coffee and goodies on a Sunday morning? Here is the 2025 sign up. Instructions and helpful hints on the sign up, or contact the office for more info!

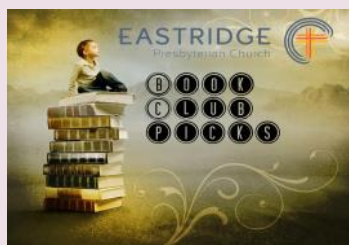
<https://bit.ly/coffeehourepc2025>

### Fourth Friday Women's Coffee Fellowship:

This fellowship group resumed in January!

Join the ladies in Huxtable on February 28 at 8:30 am for our monthly coffee fellowship! Let the office know if you would like to be included in an email reminder.

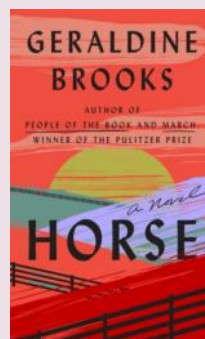




The **EPC Book Club** meets the second Monday of each month September through June at 7:00 pm. Locations vary...check the Welcome Center for info when you arrive!

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, **Horse by Geraldine Brooks** is our pick for February. Join us February 10 at 7:00 pm in M12 for discussion and refreshments.



**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY:** The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of December 12, 2024.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9:30 a.m. service on December 15 and 22, 2024, and January 5, 2025.

The Session removed from the member rolls: Duane Olsen, deceased January 5, 2025, and Virginia Dietrich, deceased January 8, 2025.

The Session received a report on the Angel Tree project for 2024.

The Session elected Shirley Flynn and Renae Oestmann as commissioners to the Homestead Presbytery meeting on February 15, 2025.

The Session received a report from the Outreach Committee which showed that the clothing drive for Lefler Middle School resulted in the donation of 46 coats and other clothing.



**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.

Trailblazers for February: Join us February 21 for entertainment at 7:00 p.m. in Huxtable Lounge. Marcia Claesson is playing dulcimer autoharp...free will offering taken. Committee: Nelsons, Jim Gies, Noel DeKalb

The **2025 liturgist sign up** is now online!

Here is the link: <https://bit.ly/liturgist2025epc>

Let the office or a pastor know if you are interested in serving as a liturgist.





### 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. **Updated sign up:** <https://bit.ly/gatheringplace2025epc>

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



**EASTRIDGE**  
FOOD PANTRY

### EASTRIDGE FOOD PANTRY:

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

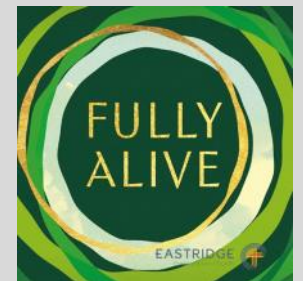
Distribution: <https://bit.ly/FPDistFood>  
Filling boxes: <https://bit.ly/FPFillingBoxes>

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

## MEET THE STAFF

### LENT AT EASTRIDGE:

Ash Wednesday dinner and service: Dinner will be pot luck crock pot meals 6 pm in the Welcome Center; worship at 6:45 pm (March 5). Our focus for Lent will be *Fully Alive*. Look for more information in our March newsletter!



Please join us to learn about the **history of Lincoln's Eastridge neighborhood from Dr. Edward Zimmer**. Dr. Zimmer was the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department's historic preservation planner and has numerous publications on Lincoln's history.

This event will take place in the **Huxtable Lounge on Sunday, February 16 following worship**. Light refreshments will be served.

Check out the Facebook event for more info!



**Join us for an informative talk on the history of the Eastridge Neighborhood!**

**EASTRIDGE**  
Presbyterian Church



1135 Eastridge Drive  
Lincoln NE 68510

