



## From the Pastor's Pen...

Last summer, a book came across my desk, with a title that instantly drew me in. It is written by pastor and author Jill Duffield, "*Appreciate These Things: Eight Ways of Cultivating Compassion*." It was really a few words of that title:

*Appreciate. Cultivate. Compassion.*

Following our Advent and Christmas theme "What do you fear: Insisting on Hope," we were drawn to the natural next step that Duffield's book offered. She draws on Paul's words to the church in Philippi, "Finally, beloveds, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things." While this passage is well-known to many of us, it often appears on its own as an inspirational blessing. When we put it back in its context of the letter, we remember that Paul is writing to the Philippians from a jail cell. "Both are experiencing extreme pressure to back off from their proclamation of the crucified and risen Messiah," according to scholar Jane Lancaster Patterson. They are living under personal, social, and political tension.

*Appreciate. Cultivate. Compassion.*

*Appreciate:* "More and more I've come to believe in the need to appreciate. More specifically, to appreciate people, the ones right in front of us, here and now." I recently received a letter from someone who shared that they now have a caregiver come to their home several times a week. "It's because of my old age," they wrote. And then noted, "I'm so thankful for their company and their help."

*Cultivate:* Just as we cultivate seeds, plants, and crops, we can also "tend to" our souls. Yes, this is another invitation to participate in spiritual practices. I honestly believe that the upcoming season of short cold days is an opportune time to engage in cultivating our souls through these practices.

(Function). Kindle Edition.  
Duffield, Jill J.. *Appreciate These Things: Eight Ways of Cultivating Compassion* (p. 14).  
(Function). Kindle Edition.

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APPRECIATE  
*these*  
THINGS

EIGHT WAYS OF  
CULTIVATING COMPASSION



## From the Pastor's Pen...

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*Compassion:* Duffield notes that it's hard to see others and ourselves for what we are in a world that often reminds us what we're not. Our Christian faith professes that we are not perfect - only God is perfect. This knowledge can be freeing and help us to appreciate each other for the characteristics and traits that make us who we are. Paul is kind enough to list eight characteristics in the community that he appreciates: whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

Paul then tells the Philippians to "think" on these things. Lancaster Patterson offers further translations of the Greek word used there: "tally up," "be attentive to," "notice," "appreciate." All these words remind me of Mary, pondering in her heart, meditating on all that she had heard and seen. I believe that we can change the world. I know that makes me an optimist, a dreamer, and maybe

even a fool. I don't care. I still believe it. I believe it starts with each one of us, and spreads as we share it with others. This hope that we insist on - that is greater than our fear - that allows us to

*Appreciate. Cultivate. Compassion.*

"I'd like to move to admiration and even to awe of the people and creatures with whom I share this earth. I'd like to think that a generosity of spirit might be a means of resistance to the contempt that threatens to render all of us extinct. Perhaps appreciation could draw us into a curious proximity that reveals our inextricable and our much-resisted need for one another."

~ Pastor Melodie

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/ordinary-28/commentary-on-philippians-41-9-6>  
Duffield, Jill J.. *Appreciate These Things: Eight Ways of Cultivating Compassion* (p. 14).



Sign up for the Zoom study! Thursdays at 10:00 am starting January 8. Click on link below for more info.

<https://bit.ly/appthesethingsstudy>

The **January Annual Meeting** will be Sunday, January 25 following worship.

Committee leaders, please turn in your submissions for the annual report by Sunday, January 11.



**Eastridge Food Pantry volunteer sign ups:**

Distribution:

<https://bit.ly/FPDistFood>

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



Playlists for the sermon series!

Apple:



Spotify:





## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS, DECEMBER 2025:

- Approve Session Meeting Minutes for November 2, 2025
- Approve Congregation and Corporation Meeting Minutes for November 16, 2025
- Acknowledge that communion was served on Sunday, December 7 at 9:30 a.m.
- Acknowledge that Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the funeral service for Edward Kemble on 11-7-2025 at Roper and Sons South
- Acknowledge that Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial/funeral service for Betty Beam and Judge C. Arlen Beam on 11-21-25 at Eastridge
- Acknowledge that communion will be served on the following dates in 2026: the first Sunday of each month and Maundy Thursday
- Chris Boden and Renae Oestman will serve as conveners for Lenten and Easter Seasons
- The Annual Meeting will be held on January 25, 2026 and Installation of Officers on February 1, 2026
- Susan Budler, Kris Brenneis, Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon, and Rev. Dummermuth attended the Homestead Presbytery Meeting on November 20 in Tekamah
- Food Pantry volunteers have been going to connecting churches and asking for volunteers
- Recent activity from Outreach reported purchasing coats for students at Lefler Middle School; donating gift cards from the Angel Tree to Aging Partners, Fresh Start, and Lefler Middle School; and collecting toilet paper in January for the Food Pantry and Fresh Start



**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.

**Join us on January 16 for Soup, Supper, Games (including Bingo!) 6:00 p.m. in Huxtable Lounge.**

## Livestream concert to benefit *Voices of Hope*:

*Voices of Hope* took in approximately \$ 500 on the evening of December 14 during the McGuire Christmas concert, livestreamed in conjunction with The Coffee Roaster. Thank you for your donations!



**Fourth Friday Women's Coffee Fellowship:** This fellowship group resumes in January! Join the ladies in Huxtable on January 23 at 8:30 am for our monthly coffee fellowship. Let the office know if you would like to be included in an email reminder.





## EASTRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN ANGEL TREE:

Thank you for being an angel, by participating in this effort to brighten the holidays for others among us.

Many of you contributed to this ministry by purchasing gift cards for: Aging Partners, Fresh Start, and Lefler Middle School.

Your generosity is appreciated!



**The Gratitude and Generosity of Giving:** *Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.* **Please consider turning in an estimate of giving card for 2026 so that our stewardship/financial committee can plan a budget for next year.**

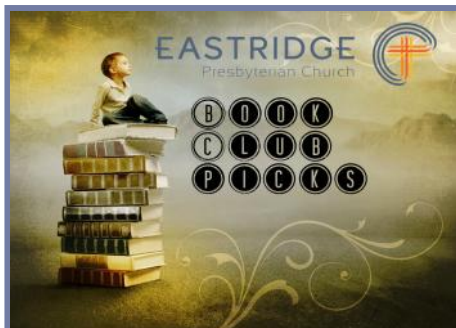


**Calling all instrumentalists!** We will have a "drop in" instrumental group again. All levels or abilities welcome! Practice after church on Sunday, Jan 18 then play the prelude Sunday, January 25. Let Brent know you want to join so

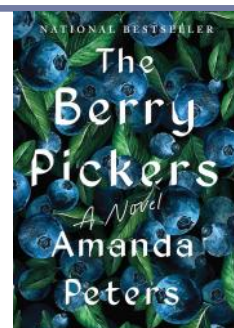
he can have music of the right instrument or ability. If you do not currently play a musical instrument but want to join in, we have wind chimes and rain sticks that take no experience to play! Just reach out to Brent, 919-609-5362 or [organman77@gmail.com](mailto:organman77@gmail.com).

**Make a joyful noise to the Lord!**

**YOUTH DINNER:** We LOVE having visitors at Youth Group on Wednesday evenings. It's a chance for us to get to know others in the congregation outside of the normal Sunday morning setting. One of the ways to get to know our youth, and be in fellowship with them, is to provide dinner on a Wednesday evening. It can be a group of people providing dinner, a couple of families getting together, or individuals. We feed around 8-10 people each week. If you provide dinner, it is most helpful for us if the volunteers can set up, serve dinner, and clean up, and most importantly JOIN US for dinner. It's a great time to hear about what the youth are doing in their life. **Look for a sign up soon for February and April.**



The Eastridge Presbyterian Book Club meets again January 12. Our January pick is ***The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters**. The EPC Book Club meets monthly from September—June in M12. Join us for discussion and refreshments! To view the year's list, head to the Eastridge website, calendar page.



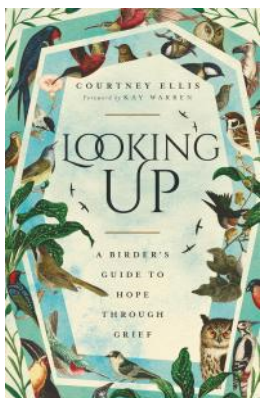


## THE GATHERING PLACE:

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/epcgatheringplace26>



The **Wednesday morning Bible study** is doing *Looking Up: A Birder's Guide to Hope Through Grief* by Courtney Ellis starting in January.

This group meets each Wednesdays at 10:30 am. For more information, contact the church office!

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

**Did you know?** Some interesting statistics on pledged giving at Eastridge:

Approximately 30% of our Eastridge members pledge gifts to the church. Pledged giving is appreciated, as it allows our finance committee to plan a budget for the coming year. This year at Eastridge, we have 6 new family units that have pledged, and 28 that have increased their pledge! Thank you for your gifts to the church.



## Eastridge financial update:

We need approximately \$ 12,000 (numbers as of Tuesday, December 30) to meet our 2025 general fund goal of \$ 550,000.


We will accept gifts toward 2025 through January 2.

Thank you for your generous gifts to Eastridge ministries!



**EASTRIDGE**  
Presbyterian Church

1135 Eastridge Drive  
Lincoln NE 68510

The logo for Eastridge Presbyterian Church features a stylized cross formed by four curved lines in blue, orange, and yellow, enclosed within a circular border.