



From the Pastor's Pen... Return to the Garden

“Mary Magdalene turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus... supposing him to be the gardener.”—John 20:14–15

Whenever I used to hear the resurrection story, I would chuckle at this moment—this beautiful case of mistaken identity. It’s one of those moments where we, as readers, feel just a little superior. We know what Mary does not yet know. She turns, sees a man, assumes he is the gardener... and we think: Mary—how could you miss it?

But what if she didn’t miss it at all?

After all, Jesus was buried in a garden. And John’s Gospel—beginning with echoes of Genesis—rarely does anything by accident. A garden is where life is cultivated, where seeds are buried and transformed. Just days before his death, Jesus spoke of a seed that must fall into the ground and die in order to bear fruit. On Holy Saturday, he is laid in the ground; on Easter morning, the garden yields new life.

So perhaps when Mary “supposed him to be the gardener”... she was seeing more clearly than we give her credit for—recognizing the one who tends life, who brings forth something new.

This Easter season, we want to take that image seriously. What if Easter is not just about recognizing Jesus, but about learning to see the world differently—to see it through the eyes of a gardener?



Easter Morning or Easter Mystery, by Maurice Denis (1870-1943), 1891

Granted, our tradition has not always encouraged that way of seeing. For a long time, the language of “dominion” in Genesis was read as permission to dominate the natural world. It helped shape a posture of distance and control—one that has contributed, in no small part, to the ecological challenges we now face.

More recently, churches have emphasized stewardship—caring for creation as something entrusted to us. That is an important shift. But as Barbara Brown Taylor observes, stewardship can still remain somewhat utilitarian: we care for the world out of responsibility, not

necessarily out of love. Because “we will not fight to save what we do not love” (Barbara Brown Taylor, *Always a Guest*, p. 22).

So what if we went one step further? What if we saw ourselves not as rulers, not even just as stewards, but as participants in a garden—creatures among creatures, woven into a web of relationships that are mutual, interdependent, and alive? Robin Wall

Kimmerer puts it simply:

“All flourishing is mutual.”

Over the weeks between Easter and Pentecost, we will return to the opening chapters of Genesis, tracing the seven days of creation. We will read them not as a scientific account or a blueprint for control, but as the poetry of a people who knew themselves to be part of the land. We will hear them alongside voices from poetry, science, and indigenous wisdom—as an invitation to rediscover our place within it.

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This will take us beyond the sanctuary. After all, we don't only want to talk about the garden—we want to step into it. Beginning on Easter morning, as we walk the sunrise road toward the Son-Rise. In conversations around Robin Wall Kimmerer's *The Serviceberry*. In weekly Walking Church gatherings, a Saturday hike through Wilderness Park, and a shared visit to Lauritzen Gardens.



This Easter season, let's return to the garden. And there—in soil and sunlight, in wind and water, in the fragile, stubborn persistence of life—may we begin to recognize the Master Gardener already at work—in the very life that surrounds us. ~ Pastor Thomas

Christ Appears to Mary Magdalen as a Gardener (or *Noli me tangere*) [detail] by an unknown artist, c. 1503-4 (from the *Vaux Passional*).

Join us at Eastridge during Holy Week!

- Sunday, March 29, 9:30 am - Palm Sunday worship (sanctuary)
- Thursday, April 2, 6 pm - Maundy Thursday heritage dinner & worship stations (welcome center and sanctuary)- bring a dish from your heritage to share (and maybe that's a grocery store specialty!)
- Friday, April 3, 8am-8pm - Good Friday worship stations (sanctuary)
- Easter Sunday, April 5, 6:30 am - walk the Sunrise Road with communion (meet in welcome center no matter the weather)
- Easter Sunday, April 5, 9:30 am - worship with communion, bells, brass, and choirs (sanctuary)



Maundy Thursday Heritage Dinner and Worship Stations!

Join us at the table this Maundy Thursday at 6 pm for a heritage potluck meal! Bring a favorite dish from your family, your family of origin, a cuisine you love, or whatever you love to grab in a hurry at the grocery store! We'd love dishes that have a story to share - mom's special lasagna, a traditional Irish meat pie, or chocolate cake. Following dinner, our worship will continue in the sanctuary with stations that reflect on table scenes from the holy days.





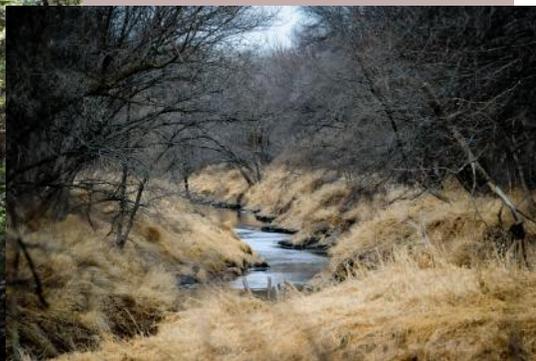
Wilderness Park Hike Saturday, April 25 | 10:00 a.m.

Join us for a relaxed morning hike in Wilderness Park, one of Lincoln's hidden gems. We'll enjoy fresh air, good conversation, and the beauty of the season as the trails come back to life.

We'll meet at 10:00 a.m. at the First Street entrance (east side of First Street between Pioneers Blvd. and Old Cheney; P4 on the map—location to be confirmed closer to the event).

The hike will last about an hour and a half at an easy pace on mostly flat terrain.

All ages welcome. Dress for the weather, wear comfortable shoes, and feel free to bring a friend.





COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES:

There are never TOO MANY items in a college care package, right? We have a great collection started but could use some additional items to fill the boxes and baskets to the brim. If you were meaning to get to the store or place an order, here are some of the items that we could still use:

- Individual servings of cookies, oatmeal, crackers, animal crackers, cheez-its, etc.
- Mac n Cheese (in the packets), ramen noodles
- Gummy candy, granola bars/protein bars, gum, crystal light/drink powder packages
- Dryer sheets (non-scented)
- Fun pens/stationary/office supplies
- Band-aids, cough drops



If you would like an idea for specific items, you can peruse our amazon wish list at <https://a.co/0eh1qg6S> or use the QR codes that we have on the tables in the Welcome Center & Narthex. Any items that are ordered can be sent to the church office marked ATTN: Kris Adler-

Brammer. We have one more option, too! Shopping isn't your thing? We will take cash donations and purchase those last few items from our list! We would like to have items and/or donations to the church office by Thursday, April 2nd so we will have everything ready to pack them up on Sunday, April 12th.

We will be packing baskets/boxes on the 12th following worship in M12 and we would invite you to join us!! If you have any questions, please contact Kris Adler-Brammer in the church office or at kadlerbrammer@eastridge.org.

What is Walking Church?

Walking church is a time to gather together and worship while we walk! We'll meet Wednesdays at 8 am (starting April 8) in the parking lot on South Street just west of 33rd. We'll explore the trail in both directions, as we worship the God of all creation!

*Note - if the weather is predicted to be prohibitive, we'll post on Facebook and send out an email notification of cancellation.





EPC Care Connections Spring Gathering!

Tuesday, April 14, 6 pm-7:30 pm in Huxtable Lounge

If you are part of EPC Care Connections, or would like to be, you are invited to our Spring Gathering!

We'll start with some time of fellowship followed by some time of discussion and discernment from 6:30 pm-7:30 pm.

Finger foods will be provided!



ROCKING CHAIRS:

If you have been with us for worship in the sanctuary the last few months, you have noticed that we have a growing number of infants and toddlers who are joining us. We are SO EXCITED about this! It is so WONDERFUL to have them as part of our community. When they join us in the sanctuary and during worship, it is an opportunity for us to meet them (and, oh yes, their parents too) and welcome them as part of our church family. As they get older and a little more mobile, it is wonderful to have them in worship with us because they start learning the patterns and traditions of worship. No, they can't read but it is so fun to see them open a hymnal with those around them and start singing their own words right along with us! You are teaching them to worship, and you don't even know it!

While we love having them with us, something else starts happening with our infants and toddlers during worship. You might notice that their eyes start getting a little heavy, they crawl into a family member's lap, and before long they have started their nap time. Worship at 9:30am means we have hit nap time for a lot of our infants and toddlers. Our narthex is a wonderful because the service is amplified into the space and there are large windows so you can see what is happening. It is a great space for a family to meet the needs of a tired or sleeping child and still participate in the worship service. We would like to try and accommodate our families with younger children by adding a couple of rocker chairs that can be used for this purpose. We could order a couple of fancy gliders but there is something a bit cozier about an old rocking chair with a padding cush-

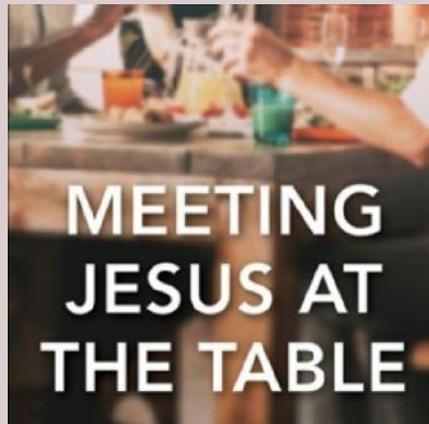
ion. This is where YOU might come in! If you have a wooden rocking chair, that is structurally sound, and it doesn't get regular usage in your home, we would love to take it off your hands. We can deal with fabric or cushion needs but we would love to have you share what once may have been used in your family home to help provide new comforts in our church family home. If you think you might have a rocker to share, please reach out to Kris Adler-Brammer in the church office.





Good Friday Worship Stations

Worship stations for self-guided worship and reflection are available from 8 am - 8 pm in the sanctuary. These stations feature table scenes from the holy days, and provide opportunities for prayer, praise, reflection, and contemplation as we observe Good Friday.



Good
Friday
Worship
Stations



SAVE THE DATE... Justice in Action's 4th Annual Nehemiah Assembly

April 30 (Thursday) @ 6:30pm

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

Join with 26 other faith communities as we work to bring systemic changes to Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Current Issues:

- Food Insecurity
- Diversion Programs

Issues Being Monitored:

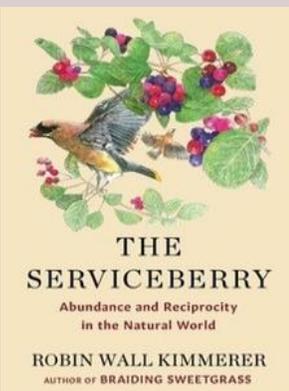
- Mental Health Navigation
- Eviction Mediation



The Food Pantry is again in need of your clean plastic bags from grocery/retail use.

You may leave them in the grocery cart in the Welcome Center.

Thank you!



Join us April 19 for a book discussion of ***“The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World”*** by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

We'll discuss the book, plus learn more about what we can do to encourage mutual flourishing, and sample some serviceberry-inspired foods! More info to come.

11:00 am Sunday, April 19 in Huxtable Lounge.

Light refreshments provided.



HIGHLIGHTS



Session Highlights March

- Approve Session Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2026
- Approve Congregation and Corporation Meeting Minutes for February 22, 2026
- Acknowledge that communion was served on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.
- Acknowledge Rev. Dummermuth officiated the memorial service for Donald Mach on February 14, 2027 at Eastridge
- Conveners for Summer 2026 are Carolyn Brandle, Celeste Illian, and Cheryl LaRue.
- Motion was carried to approve the Personnel Team's recommendation to allow vacation days for Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon from 12-21-2026 to 1-1-2027. Rev. Thomas Dummermuth will have an option to take similar vacation days in the coming years.
- Comments from the Congregational meeting have been consolidated for the Session, Finance Committee, and Board of Trustees. Each group will begin addressing their specific questions.
- Acknowledge both pastors will be attending the same continuing education event (luminosityconference.org) and will be out of town the week of March 9.
- Upcoming Lenten Services:
 - o Contemplative Prayer services will be offered on Wednesdays during Lent from 6:30-7 p.m.
 - o Palm Sunday worship, Sunday, March 29 at 9:30 a.m.
 - o Maundy Thursday heritage dinner & worship stations (bring a dish from your heritage to share), Thursday, April 2, 6 p.m.
 - o Good Friday worship stations (sanctuary), Friday, April 3, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
 - o Easter Sunday Sunrise service (walk the Sunrise Road with communion), April 5, 6:30 a.m.
 - o Easter Sunday worship, April 5, 9:30 a.m.

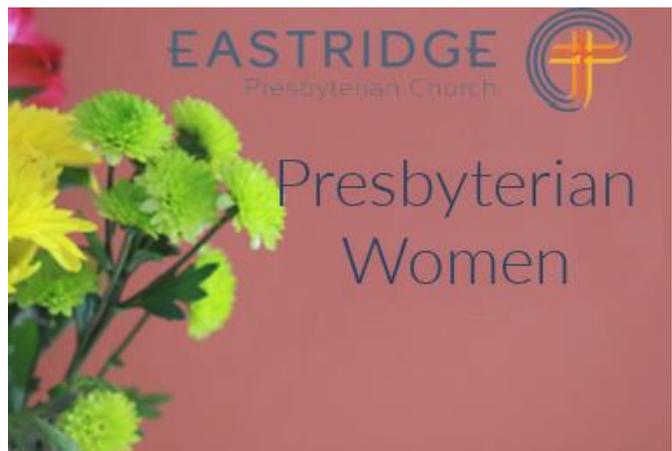
EPW April Gathering: Pacemakers

- Do you have a pacemaker?
- Do you know what it looks like?
- Do you know a lot of pacemakers are made in Switzerland?
- Do you know they are beginning to make pacemakers for babies?
- Do you need your pacemaker replaced?

Come find the answers on **April 15 at 1:00 pm at the EPW Gathering in Huxtable Lounge**. The speaker will be Leah Baker, a chemical engineer who recently returned from Switzerland and works for Metronic

in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is also a granddaughter of Carolyn Olsen.

Join us on April 15!





Save the Date:

42nd Annual Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

Join us on Thursday, May 7th, 2026 from 7:30am to 9:00am at Venue 5 Twenty-Two in Lincoln. Doors open for breakfast at 7:30am. Program begins at 8:00am.

Lincoln Mayor, Leirion Gaylor Baird, will be the honorary chair for the event. Join us for a morning of wisdom, sacred readings, and music from the wide variety of faith communities that call Lincoln, Nebraska home.



Our Keynote speaker will be the Nebraska State Poet Jewel Rodgers, a celebrated performer and the author of *Wax Over Water*. Ms. Rodgers will carry this year's theme "Who is My Neighbor", inviting guests to consider how we identify neighbors and treat them with dignity.

Let's come together to celebrate unity through community. See you there!

STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast Planning Committee invites students ages 13–19 in Lincoln to participate in a Personal Narrative Essay & Speech Contest.

Students are asked to share a short, true story about a moment when beliefs inspired someone to be a good neighbor—or when someone showed that kind of care to them.

Prizes: \$200 (1st), \$150 (2nd), \$125 (3rd)

Submission Deadline: April 3, 2026, 5:00 PM

Selected students may be invited to present their essay at the Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast.

Full guidelines and submission details are on the Prayer Breakfast Website: <https://www.lancasterfaith.org/mipb>

Or fill out the Essay Contest application online: <https://forms.gle/pf09H3HcxGxvKg6n6>





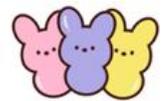
Fourth Friday Women's Coffee Fellowship:

Join the ladies in Huxtable Lounge on April 24 at 8:30 am for our monthly coffee fellowship.

Let the office know if you would like to be included in an email reminder that week as well.

Don't Be Fooled—Diversion Works!

Wednesday, April 1st at noon at the City/County Building



This April 1st, Justice in Action is hosting a public direct action to highlight a serious issue: taxpayers are paying the price for an overcrowded jail while proven, cost-effective alternatives already exist.

Using a visual display of marshmallow Peeps, community leaders will illustrate the number of people currently in the Lancaster County Jail. Each Peep represents a person in the system – and the daily cost to taxpayers to keep them there. The display will help demonstrate how quickly those costs add up when people who could be participating in diversion programs remain in jail instead.

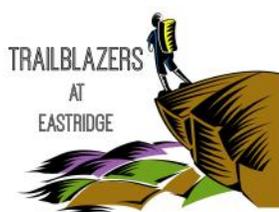
Diversion programs provide a smarter approach. They connect individuals to treatment, mental health support, and accountability while reducing costs and improving public safety for our community. Expanding diversion is one of the most effective ways to reduce jail overcrowding and use taxpayer dollars more wisely.

April Fool's Day is a lighthearted holiday, but the message is clear: continuing to rely on jail when better solutions exist leaves taxpayers footing an unnecessary bill.

Join Justice in Action and community leaders as we shine a light on this issue and call for practical solutions that make our community safer, more effective, and more responsible with public resources!



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 a daily (Mon-Fri) email prompt, contact the office as well!

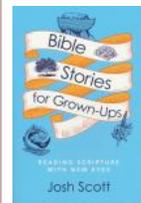


Trailblazers is a group of older adults at Eastridge that provides an opportunity for men and women, singles as well as couples, to participate together in the life of the church—in service and fellowship. **Join us on April 17 for a meal from Leon's at 6:00 p.m.** in Huxtable Lounge.

PLUS we will share our **Vacations—Good and Bad stories** (from the cancelled February meeting).

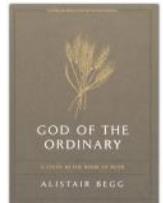


YOUTH MEALS: We LOVE having visitors at Youth Group on Wednesday evenings. It's a chance for us to get to know others in the congregation outside of the normal Sunday morning setting. One of the ways to get to know our youth, and be in fellowship with them, is to provide dinner on a Wednesday evening. It can be a group of people providing dinner, a couple of families getting together, or individuals. We feed around 10-12 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. If you would be willing to volunteer for a Wednesday in April, you can sign up with the following link or QR code. **The link to sign up is: <https://bit.ly/youthdinner25-26>**



NEW STUDIES: The Monday Night Bible Study will be doing **"Bible Stories for Grown-Ups - Reading Scripture with New Eyes"** by Josh Scott starting April 13.

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study will be doing **"God of the Ordinary"** by Alistair Begg starting April 13.



A Place to Be: The Work of the F Street Community Center

Faith Coalition of Lancaster County – April Gathering
Wednesday, April 8 | 12:00–1:00 PM Huxtable Lounge

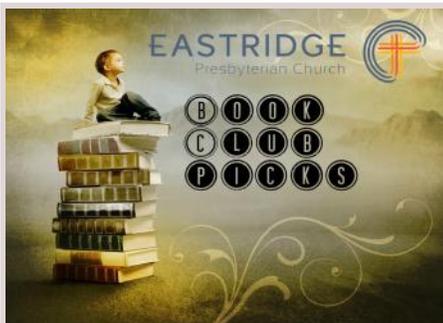
In-person (bring your own lunch) or via Zoom

Where do people go when they just need a place to be?

Join us for the April gathering of the Faith Coalition of Lancaster County as we welcome Chris Boden, Supervisor of the F Street Community Center.

The F Street Community Center is a city-run space that serves children, families, and adults across Lincoln. More than just a recreation center, it has become a daily gathering place—a space of connection, support, and stability for neighbors from all walks of life.

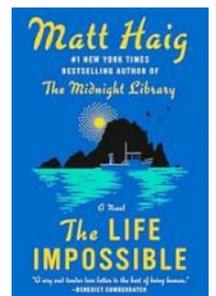
As part of our series on Shelter and Belonging, Chris will share what she's seeing on the ground—who comes through the doors, what needs surface, and what it means to create a space where anyone can simply show up and be.



The Eastridge Presbyterian Book Club meets again April 13 at 7:00 pm. Our pick for the month is: ***The Life Impossible*** by Matt Haig. The EPC Book Club meets monthly from September—June in M12.

Join us for discussion and refreshments!

Check out the entire year's list online, 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>

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
volunteer sign ups:

Distribution: <https://bit.ly/FPDistFood>

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

MEET THE STAFF

Coming soon! Watch for more information on these upcoming nature-inspired activities and events at Eastridge:

Eastridge will head to Omaha’s Lauritzen Gardens to see **Thomas Dambo's TROLLS: Save the Humans on April 22** (watch for more details on departure times/meeting times at the Gardens soon). This outdoor exhibit by acclaimed artist Thomas Dambo features six towering trolls crafted from reclaimed wood.



GARDEN VISIT: Closer to home, we’ll visit **Prairie Pines in May.**

Watch for more info on the date and time.

TERRARIUMS: We will be closing our series with a **terrarium workshop on Pentecost day.** Watch the lamp and your email inbox for more information on all upcoming events.



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