



FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN...

I don't remember learning the ABC song, but I do remember teaching it to my children. Of course, there are other songs we sing to babies - like The Wheels on the Bus; Row, Row, Row Your Boat; and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. The ABC song is different, though, in that it is laying the foundation for reading.

I love to read. I remember reading Pippi Longstocking, Ralph S. Mouse, and The Littles. I think it was those

books that really sparked my love of reading. Being able to escape into a story always brought me joy. As I grew, I came to love all kinds of reading: fiction and non-fiction, theology and biography, politics and science. I've found that the key to a good book is not necessarily the subject, it's the writing. Specifically, it's the phrasing and use of words in a way that opens my mind and touches my soul. To this day, I love to read, and am thankful to be

in a community with talented writers, local bookstores, and book clubs! As Thomas Jefferson said, "I cannot live without books."

Back to the ABC song, though (because reading isn't possible without knowing your ABCs). It is through learning these letters individually, simply, the shape and the sound and the speaking of them, that we begin to be able to read complex sentences. A is for Apple. B is for Bee. C is for Cat. D is for Dog. E is for Elephant. Soon you see not just the individual letters, but words as a whole. A-n-d is and. T-h-e is the. And so on. Using

letters to make words and words to make sentences, some of the most beautiful stories have begun.

"Nan almost always believed, as her father had, that even deep wounds could be repaired, that God healed all parts of us like skin: no matter how sharp the cut, it would someday knit itself back together and leave only a scar." (*Dearly Beloved* by Cara Wall, Prologue, page 1).

"June 12, 1954--The drive from Salina to Morgen was three hours, and for much of it, Emmett hadn't said a word." (*The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles).

"In the beginning was the Word." (John's Gospel).

Sometimes, books are so big that it takes us a long time to read them. Like 700+ page biographies written by Ron Chernow and Walter Isaacson. Some books are broken into volumes like Karl Barth's *Dogmatics* or John Calvin's *Institutes*. Sacred texts, like our Bible, are broken up into smaller books, with chapters, and verses - all added

long after their writing as notations for study. This way the pastor, teacher, and disciple could all find the same starting point on the same page and word.

Some of our texts were meant to be memorized. Particularly the Psalms. Like Psalm 119. Using the Hebrew aleph-bet as a pattern, this Psalm was committed to memory. Sing the Psalm to the same tunes I mentioned earlier using this pneumatic device, and you're well on your way to memorizing scripture.

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FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN...

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Anna Carter Florence is Professor of Preaching at Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. In her book, *A is for Alabaster*, she remembers falling in love with reading the complex stories of the Bible. She remembers her fourth grade Sunday School class, where she and her classmates learned to read the Bible. She tells how it was horrible and boring, even though her teacher clearly loved reading the Bible himself. Inspired by his love of reading the Bible, she convinced her parents to let her drop out of Sunday School, and instead read *The Story Bible* by Pearl S. Buck. She says, "Scripture came alive for me that winter. The stories leaped from the page with surprising energy, and I couldn't wait to follow: where would this one land today?! Where would that one lead?! The Bible was turning out to be the least dull book I'd ever read. And if I hadn't learned that in Mr. Moore's Sunday school class, I'd seen it in his face—for him, scripture was a living story. His story. My story. I just needed to hear it in a form I recognized..."¹ She uses the abecedary to explore stories of the Bible. Her goal, she says, is to read "like a nine-year-old Sunday school dropout who has had enough of dead and boring and knows that a living story is possible."²

This summer, we will use the abecedary to explore different stories of the Bible. We invite you to channel your inner nine-year old as we hear a simple story for



complex times. All the stories we'll hear are from times that were complex, just like ours. They are complex on the personal level as well as the national and global scale, just like ours. Of course, these stories could (and often do) have full volumes written about them, which might make the stories boring. What we hope to do is consider how the simple story speaks to the complex time, making it come alive for us today.

Of course, we'll have some fun along the way. We begin May 31 with A is for Abigail, and will jump through the Old and New Testaments all the way to Z is for Zaccheus. We'll dine *Al fresco* with a picnic on May 31 (A is for Abigail) and have hot dogs on June 28 as we hear a story H is for Healing. We'll celebrate going back to school on August 9 with Sweets and consider S is for Salt. We'd also love to invite you to write your own abecedary of stories, using the question prompts in this newsletter (page 8).

Last summer, our series invited us to be five again, as we connected scripture with children's books. This summer, we're growing up just a bit as we are invited to be nine again. Our hope is that we might learn once again to love reading the stories in the Bible, one alphabet letter at a time.

~ Pastor Melodie

¹Florence, Anna Carter. *A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture* (p. 2). (Function). Kindle Edition.

²Florence, Anna Carter. *A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture* (pp. 2-3). (Function). Kindle Edition.



"Pop up" instrumental group:

We would love to have another "drop in orchestra/band" again - we will practice July 12 after the worship service and play the prelude on July 19. All musical instruments welcome! Just let Brent know what you play and ability so you can get the music ahead of time. Organman77@gmail.com or 919-609-5362.



Becoming an Earth Care Congregation

The Trustees and Session have created a team that will evaluate becoming an Earth Care Congregation. This designation is given to congregations who are making efforts to care for creation in four areas: worship, facilities, education, and outreach. Congregations who want the certification are asked to perform an internal assessment to gauge our current efforts. In any areas where we may fall short, the team will make recommendations to the appropriate board.

"In 1990 the 202nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, which calls our denomination to engage in the tasks of restoring creation." The Earth Care Congregation Certification was created as a way to guide and inspire congregations and their members to care for the earth.

Here are some questions the Trustees and Session asked as they considered forming the team:

*Does it cost anything to become certified?

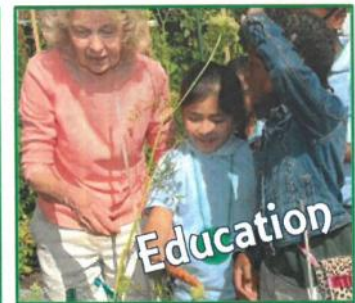
No. There is no annual fee for certification. We did note that the assessment may draw our attention to areas of improvement that may result in some projects that need financial backing. (For instance, we believe the assessment will help us uncover and prioritize areas of our building that need updating for efficiency purposes.)

*What is the process?

The "Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches" outlines the process. First, a team is established to conduct the assessment. Second, they present the results to the Session (and in this case the Trustees), along with a score and any potential projects they've uncovered. A minimum score of 100 (25 points in each of the four areas) is required for certification. Once that score is reached, the third and final step is to submit the assessment to the Earth Care Certification team between January 1 and February 15 of any given year. Certified congregations receive a certificate, listing on the website, notification to the Presbytery, and a press release. We can also then use the ECC logo.

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Earth Care Congregations





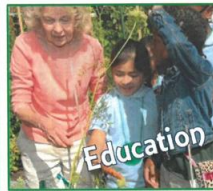
Becoming an Earth Care Congregation

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*Why would we do this now?

It is our belief that we are already living into the ECC pledge. However, this certification is much like our certification as a Hunger Action Congregation and a Matthew 25 Congregation. This is a similar initiative of our denomination to help us clarify our values and guide our decision-making to honor those values. It will help us to be intentional in our efforts to care for the earth as a congregation and inspire others to care for the earth as well.

Earth Care Congregations



*When will we apply?

Our hope is to be able to apply in 2027.

*Who is on the team?

Huge thanks to Craig Schumacher and Gary Killian, co-chairs of the team. Also serving are: Robin Hadfield, communication and record keeping; Susan Budler, Outreach; Sandie Franks, Education; Randy Franks, Facilities; and Pastor Melodie.

*How can I help?

We are excited for all the many things we can do together! As the team gathers information, they will be contacting folks from different groups and activities in the congregation.

Eastridge Library "Did You Know?"

- Eastridge members George Kilpatrick, Nancy Brumbaugh and Sandy Hilsabeck Hastings are authors! Their books below can be found in the library:

The Final Few by George Kilpatrick

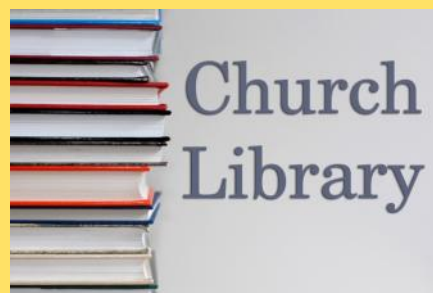
Ready or Not by Sandra Hilsabeck

Time Travel at Jagged Rock Lighthouse by Nancy (Bayne) Brumbaugh

- Children's books and bibles are in the library.
- Borrow a bible commentary to supplement your bible passage reading [Section 220]
- Lincoln author Mary Pipher's books are in the library. Check them out!
- The library has 61 fiction books by Karen Kingsbury.
- There are many devotion books in the library [section 248]

- Books with a red dot indicate a selection by Eastridge Presbyterian Women.
- Many popular authors have books in the library including Richard Paul Evans, Jan Karon, Max Lucado, and Charles Swindoll.
- Pulitzer prize winner "*All the Light We Cannot See*" by Anthony Doerr can be found in the library.

Use the library's computer system to check out or return a book. Get your library number from the office or Cathy Schapmann. Or write your info on the yellow pad if that works better for you.





EPC Care Connections

It's hard to believe it's been two years since we commissioned our first EPC Care Connections ministry participants. In the past two years, we have shared many stories of connections being made through connecting with those at home, young families, and around the time of death. Our three connection groups have been gathering to share ideas as small groups as well as together as a team. At our gathering in April, we spent some time reflecting on our two years of ministry by discerning our "why" and thinking about how this ministry fits into our family of faith.

What is our why?

Maybe you've heard about a "why." When we ask this question, we are identifying why we do what we do. Or rather, we find out why it is important to us. It makes a huge difference to know the "why" behind our actions. It gives us guidance in not only how we act and make decisions, it also helps us to let go of actions and decisions that are no longer serving us. Because this ministry is still in its infancy stages, we took some time sharing our individual "whys" of caring for each other.

Here's some of what we heard!

Because we believe...

*We believe that once you are a part of our church family, you're always part of our church family - even when

you can't be physically present in our building.

*We believe death and dying is scary for most people to talk about, but that our faith tells us we are people who believe in new life.

*Jesus Christ models connection and caring for others in his life, and calls us to do the same.

*Being part of a faith family is important.

*We are ALL children of God.

*Everyone is created in the image of God exactly as they are.

*Everyone is beloved and needs connection.

We are:

*Visiting in homes, sharing church events and involving others in holiday traditions.

*Visiting around the time of death, sharing grief booklets, and discussing questions and concerns.

*Connecting in our visits, building each other up and reminding each

other we are loved.

*Supporting families and young children at a time that can be isolating.

*Making contact with young families carrying love from the church family.

*Listening and sharing stories with each other.

*Intentionally building relationship

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EPC Care Connections

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So that:

- *Members continue to feel loved.
- *Death and dying is easier to talk about and accepting it is part of life.
- *Our faith family feels like they matter and they feel Christ's love.
- *All ages are embraced with church family and God's love.
- *Others have space to be and become themselves.
- *We have meaningful connections.

These are our individual whys. Together, we spent time discerning what the why for EPC Care Connections is, and

have a new "why statement" for our ministry!

Because we believe we are all children of God

We are building relationships outside of our walls

So that we grow in relationship with God and others.

Maybe this ministry seems simple. And it is. While simple, its impact is significant. Especially as we hear about the alarming statistics of the loneliness epidemic and the effects of isolation on families and the aging population. We're not asking for anything other than time to connect with each other.

If you would like to be part of this ministry, please contact the church office at office@eastridge.org.



From the Eastridge Outreach Committee:

Atlas Outreach Blitz June 14-20

Join Atlas as they "blitz" our neighborhood and city! Through this week of outreach, they hope to build new relationships and support old ones by providing various kinds of help and connection. Click on QR code for more information.



Join Atlas: Lincoln on our FIRST EVER...

OUTREACH BLITZ JUNE 14-20



Join Atlas as we "blitz" our neighborhood and city! Through this week of outreach, we hope to build new relationships and support old ones by providing various kinds of help and connection.

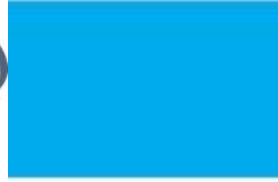
Volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups!

- Opportunities to serve all week
- Serve meals, provide hygiene kits, and connect with neighbors



Scan the QR code to find how you can partner and sign up today

Questions? Reach out to brody@atlaslincoln.org

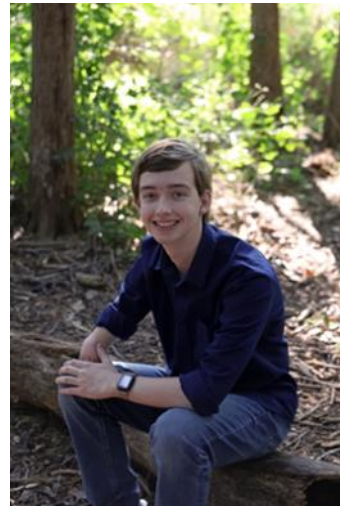


EPC High School Graduates

Kitnyang Kuon finished his high school career in October graduating from Lincoln Southwest. Kitnyang's mother is Nyabuoy Chan. He is a confirmed member of EPC and has participated in Faith Formation and Youth Group. He has also volunteered at the Eastridge Food Pantry. For the past few years, Kitnyang has worked at Chick-Fil-A. This fall Kitnyang will attend Southeast Community College in Lincoln.



Tristan Hawk is graduating from Lincoln North Star. Tristan's parents are Charlene Hawk and Christopher Hawk. In addition to attending North Star, Tristan has also been a part of the Electrical Construction Pathway program at The Career Academy through Southeast Community College. He also participated in SkillsUSA. In addition to school, Tristan has volunteered with Food Net and The Cat House. When he is not in school or volunteering, Tristan was working at Hy-Vee. This fall Tristan will attend University of Nebraska – Omaha where he will major in Construction Management.





What's Your Story?

This summer, we are invited to explore ABCs of Faith: Simple Stories for Complex Times. In this series, we will be exploring stories from the Bible that tell us about God and God's people. But our faith is also carried through our own stories.

When someone asks, "What's your story?" they're asking about the moments that shaped you: the people, experiences, challenges, and turning points that made you who you are. Scripture is full of such stories—and so are we.

We'd love to hear yours.

Throughout the series, we'll offer prompts connected to the themes we're exploring. You're invited to share a brief reflection on any prompt that resonates with you—especially a moment that changed your mind, your heart, or your life.

Selected stories may be shared (with your permission) in our newsletter, devotionals, or even during worship.

Telling our stories takes courage. Listening to them builds connection. Together, they help us discover how God is still at work among us.

Take a look at the prompts below and see what speaks to you. Then return your story to the church office or email it to office@eastridge.org.

- Tell a story about a time when you didn't have the whole picture and were asked to trust anyway.
- Tell a story about a time you had to be brave or bold.
- Tell a story about a time you knew you were in the wrong but struggled to admit it. How did others show you grace?
- Tell a story about a time you chose to do what you believed was right, even when it might upset others or risk your reputation.
- Tell a story about a moment when you realized you were growing up—whether it felt too fast, too slow, or just right.
- Tell a story about a time you tried to remain neutral, chose a side, or felt pulled in different directions. What helped you discern what to do?
- Tell a story about a time when a child spoke or revealed a truth that others needed to hear.
- Tell a story about a time when others expected you to have it all together—or to know more than you did.





Fourth Friday Women's Coffee Fellowship:

Join the ladies in Huxtable Lounge on June 26 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.

HIGHLIGHTS

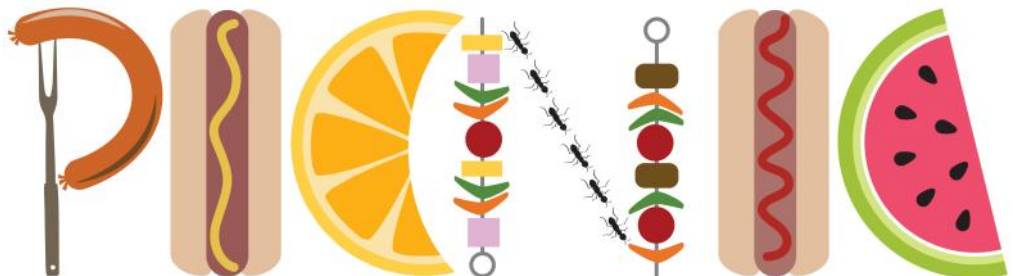


Session Highlights: May 2026

- Approve Session Meeting Minutes for April 12, 2026.
- Acknowledge that communion was served on Sunday, May 3 at 9:30.
- Acknowledge that Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service for Jane Kinsey on April 17, 2026.
- The Session thanked Rev. Dummermuth for doing a great job at the Justice in Action's Nehemiah Action Assembly. Both Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon and Rev. Dummermuth provided information on their roles with JIA and the Nehemiah Action Assembly.
- The motion was carried to approve the fall theme "What We Hold in Common" beginning Labor Day. The theme highlights the places and ways we not only share our lives together, but the ways in which we share responsibility as a community. Carol Ripley and Chris Boone will serve as conveners.
- The Session approved the creation of an Earth Care Congregation Team, in cooperation with the Trustees. Components of becoming an Earth Care Congregation include completing activities and projects in worship, education, facilities, and outreach. The application will be submitted between January 1 to February 15, 2027. Craig Schumacher and Gary Killian have volunteered to serve.

PICNIC AFTER WORSHIP:

We are planning a picnic "Al fresco" experience after worship on **Sunday, May 31**. We will enjoy good food, fresh air, and easy conversation on the East Patio. Hope you can make it!



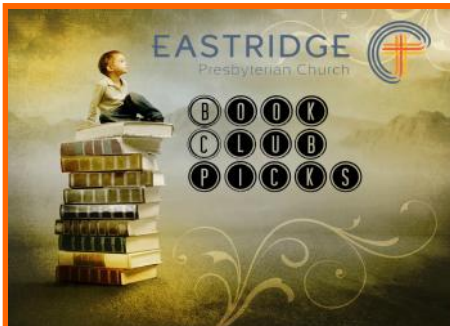


Lefler Market 2025/2026: The school year is over and we did our last Market on May 6th. Since September we served the following students and staff at Lefler Middle School.

I would like to thank the 10 dedicated EPC members we have had work this past year volunteering at the Markets; your help is invaluable and greatly appreciated. It is always a rewarding project to work on and having the student groups help set-up is always fun.

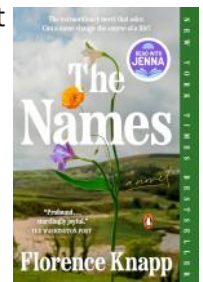
~ Susan Budler

2025-2026	students served	staff served	total households (students)	total households (staff)	total households (all)
	1620	194	7941	492	8422



The Eastridge Presbyterian Book Club meets again June 8 at 7:00 pm. Our pick for the month is: ***The Names* by Florence Knapp**. The EPC Book Club meets monthly from September—June in M12.

Join us for discussion and refreshments!
Check out next year's list on page 12 of this newsletter.





The Food Pantry is looking for short term volunteers throughout the month of June to help us gather information during shopping on Wednesdays and at the drive-through distribution on Sundays. We are switching to an electronic system required by Feeding America and must gather family information. Volunteers will fill out a paper form for each client. Our regular volunteers will be giving out food so it is imperative we have others to help. If you are able to assist please contact Sara McInerney or the office.



EASTRIDGE

FOOD PANTRY

MUSIC NEWS:

Thanks to a generous donation, our **handbells were completely serviced and repaired in April.** We are thankful for the donation that keeps our bells in perfect ringing shape!

We are the recipients of a grand piano for our Huxtable Lounge! Our old piano served us well, and we will be searching to find it a new home. However, the donation has provided a much needed upgrade for our current use of the space. **If you know anyone who might be interested in the piano, please tell them to contact the church office!**

The **Mountain Dulcimer Club** meets sometimes at Crete and sometimes in Lincoln at Eastridge. It is a super friendly group and the dulcimer is a very easy instrument to begin playing (even if you have never played a musical instrument before!) Speak to Brent Shaw if interested in joining!

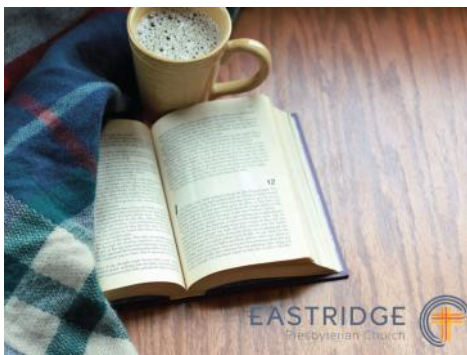




EPC Book Club: Get ready for another exciting year of reading! Here is the list for EPC Book Club 2026-2027. Due to Christmas and its inherent busy-ness, we do not meet in December. For more information, contact the office.

September 14	
October 12	
November 9	
January 11	

February 8	
March 8	
April 12	
May 10	
June 14	



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!



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>



EASTRIDGE
FOOD PANTRY

**Eastridge Food
Pantry
volunteer
sign ups:**

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

Watch for more information soon on our upcoming **Mental Health Café** scheduled for June 24 at 7:00 pm in Huxtable Lounge/East Patio.

We’ll explore ways that faith impacts mental health. Not just “pray about it”: real talk on faith and mental health. Join us for food & conversation around the table(s)!




HOT DOGS AND FELLOWSHIP on Sunday, June 28:

We are planning a **hot dog picnic** after worship on Sunday, June 28. Join us on the East Patio and/or Huxtable Lounge following worship that morning. More info to come!



EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



1135 Eastridge Drive
Lincoln NE 68510

