



Next Steps in Faith Formation

The church is changing! We see it all around us. The ways in which it is changing are so many that if I tried to list them, I would surely miss a few. While we lament and reminisce about all that has come before us, it also gives us the opportunity for new things. We can celebrate ALL that was done to build the ministry of the church and look forward to the new and exciting things that come next.

I hear many of these conversations around Eastridge, but they are not unique to us or even the PCUSA. They are happening in churches everywhere; so much so that groups have started to talk with folks, ask honest questions, and share their findings. Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS), in partnership with the ELCA and the PCUSA, put together a research project to help understand what is happening in the life of our churches. In September of 2025, VTS published their findings through TryTank Research Institute with a study titled “Young Adult Parents: What happens to faith when “nones” have kids.”

The study talked with young parents, or those who intended to be parents, between the ages of 25 – 39. We received some GREAT information from them! Two things they heard very quickly is that young parents are having fewer children or they are choosing not to have children at all. (A Gallup poll reports that nearly 40% of 25-39 year olds are not planning to have children.) In

addition to this statistic, there was a lot of great insight shared into membership/attendance trends especially around the topic of faith, church, and spirituality. Below, I would like to share the major findings from this report with you.

OVERVIEW: The number of US adults who now identify as “Nones” has more than doubled since 2005 and now make up 1/3 of the population. (A None is an individual who does not identify with any religious affiliation.) At

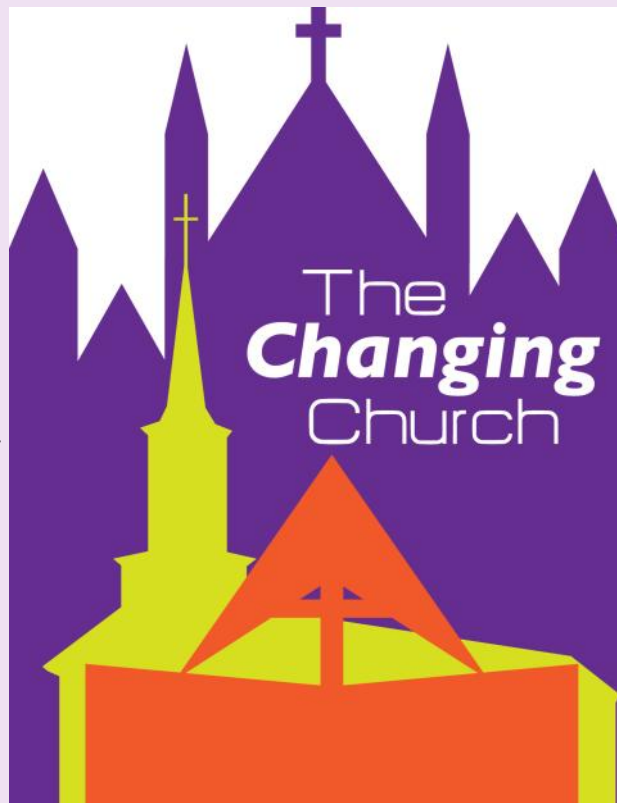
the same time, the number of self-identified Christians has fallen dramatically along with membership and church attendance numbers while self-professed spirituality has increased. One thing remains constant despite all this change and that is that families and parents remain the single most influential predictor of faith identity for young people.

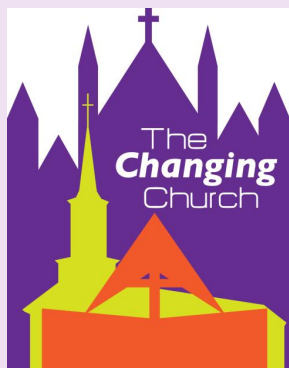
MAJOR FINDINGS:

The faith stops here (or Nones are parenting VERY differently). Overall, the data collected revealed a consistent pattern that the “Nones” are largely rejecting institutional expres-

sions of faith and anticipate minimal, if any, involvement with them in their parenting. When asked, the Nones believe that it is not necessary to be a Christian to be a good person or have good moral values. Christian parents fall on the other end with half believing that belief in God is necessary to have good moral values.

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Parents are worried about a lot of things...but religion is the least of their concerns. When asked about their worries, faith and spirituality consistently ranked the lowest. The two highest concerns were being responsible and working hard.

Parents also expressed little concern about passing on their faith. When asked about the barriers to church engagement, "time constraints and busy schedules" were most often cited.

Life is hard... and the church is not seen as a resource. The findings here matter because the need for support is clear. When asked to reflect on their overall life experience, 71% of the respondents agreed with the statement: Life is generally harder than I expected it to be at this point."

Jesus is popular... but the church isn't. The fact that Jesus and the church are viewed as different from one another speaks volumes. Other data in this area confirms the story of institutional distrust among a broader movement away from all social institutions.

Parents are overwhelmingly confident in their ability to teach their kids to live meaningful lives. When asked directly about their ability to teach their children the skills needed for a meaningful life, an overwhelming

84% rated themselves as "extremely" or "very confident." While parents value the role of virtues in their children's lives, their interest in receiving institutional support from churches is notably low. The results in this area suggest a shift in focus from traditional church programming to more action-oriented or family centered activities.

Parents think virtues are essential for their kids... but that the church doesn't teach them. Parents agreed on which virtues they found important, but they are not confident that the church will adequately emphasize them.

Okay, you may look at all of this and feel discouraged. PLEASE DON'T! There is much more information in the study that gives us an exciting way forward! The session has seen the whole report and has begun to digest its contents. They are using this information as they talk and plan for the ministry of Eastridge. As I shared in the opening paragraphs, it does require us to celebrate ALL that has been done to get us to this point and then share that same excitement as we figure out how to move forward. We have an amazing start, our children and youth love to be here and they love to be together. As we work toward this fall, you will see some small changes that will help to serve some of the needs of our young families. We hope you will join us as we work to be in community together.

~ Kris Adler-Brammer



MUSIC NEWS: "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.

The small woodwind group will practice again on Thursday, July 9 at 6:15pm and then play for worship on Sunday, July 12. Speak to Brent if you would like to join us! (Flutes, whistles, recorders, bassoon, piccolo, any C instrument etc. welcome!)

Contact: organman77@gmail.com or 919-609-5362.



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.





Thanks to our summer music volunteers:

June 28 - Patty Niemann, Diane Worrell-Eaton and Charlie Schroeder

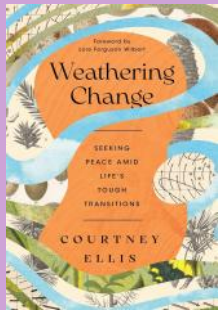
July 5 - Bill Reichert and Diane Worrell-Eaton

July 12 - Jen Olsen, Kylie Meter, Abigail Kabell

July 19 - Orchestra/Band

August 9 - Dulcimer club

August 23 - Guests Leila and Phillippe (piano and guitar)



The Wednesday morning Bible study starts a new book in July.

We'll begin "*Weathering Change: Seeking Peace Amid Life's Tough Transitions*" by Courtney Ellis July 8. This study is led by Donna Gustafson.

Contact the office for more information.

We are doing some maintenance at Eastridge! Thanks to the talents of a generous church member, some paint work is being done on our main level. We'd love your assistance in keeping things in their place. If you are using tables, etc. please return them to their proper location when finished. Thank you in advance!

THANKS

Some **Eastridge events** (music in worship, our recent picnic!)





Fourth Friday Women's Coffee Fellowship:

Join the ladies in Huxtable Lounge on July 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.

Session Highlights: June 2026

Approve Session Meeting Minutes for May 3, 2026

Acknowledge that communion was served on Sunday, June 7 at 9:30 a.m.

The theme for Fall will be "What We Hold in Common." 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. Fall conveners are Chris Boone and Carol Ripley.

The Board of Trustees met with Harley's Heating & Air and will begin testing a Pilot Project in the main level day-care rooms. This involves software designed to maximize energy efficiency of the Church's HVAC equipment. The ultimate goal is to reduce energy usage which aligns with the Church's goal of becoming an Earth Care Congregation.

Correspondence from PCUSA Annual Giving Office reported as of March 31, 2026, Eastridge's contribution to the Christmas Joy Offering was \$732. Beginning January 2026, the Churchwide Special Offerings were reduced to three (Christmas Joy Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, and World Communion Offering) as voted on at the 226th General Assembly (2024).

Kris Adler-Brammer is Homestead Presbytery Elder/Commissioner to the 227th General Assembly in Milwaukee, June 22-July 2. She will be serving on the Climate Justice committee.

HIGHLIGHTS



Eastridge Library "Did You Know?"

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.

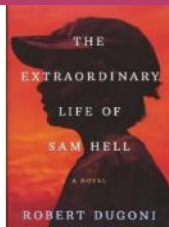
Did you know? The library has many contemporary works of fiction, purchased by the Eastridge Presbyterian Women for their yearly reading awards (with red dots on the spine).





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.

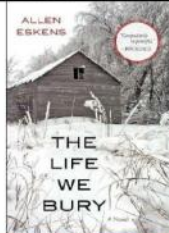
September 14



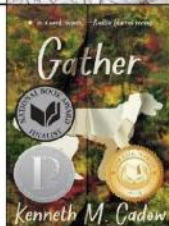
October 12



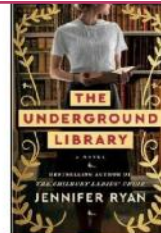
November 9



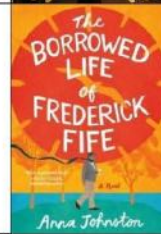
January 11



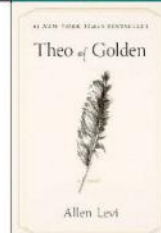
February 8



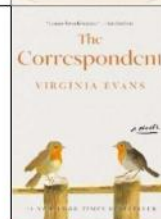
March 8



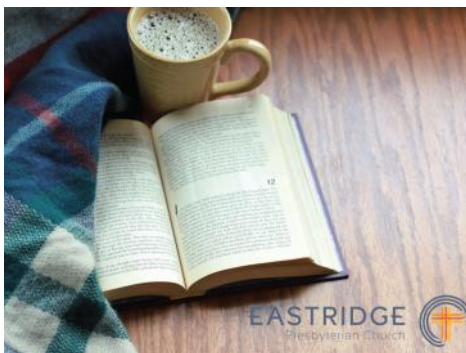
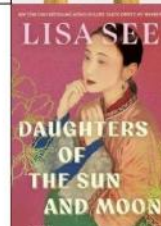
April 12



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
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

Dulcimer Club:

Some members of the Lincoln Dulcimer club will share in church on Sunday, August 9 and will practice before that the 4th Saturdays of June and July.

Talk to Brent if interested about learning and trying it out. He has a beginner Mountain Dulcimer that can be borrowed and used to learn.




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.



EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



1135 Eastridge Drive
Lincoln NE 68510

