EASTRIDGE
Presbyterian Church



Making Room for Advent

Dear Eastridge Friends,

Have you ever been sitting on the couch, perfectly comfortable, maybe with a blanket and a good show, when you remember the dishes in the sink? Or the laundry waiting to be folded? Or that project you've been putting off for weeks?

I find myself in this situation more often than I'd like to admit. I tell myself, "Ten more minutes, and then I'll get up." Twenty minutes later, I'm still there. The dishes haven't moved, the laundry hasn't folded itself, and now I've added guilt to my list of things to deal with.

Sometimes I really do need those extra twenty minutes of rest. Other times, I'm avoiding something I know needs my attention. Figuring out which is which can be surprisingly difficult.

I've been thinking about this as Advent approaches.

I love Advent. I love the traditions, the familiar hymns, and the anticipation. But I've also come to recognize that Advent looks and feels different for each of us.

December can get crowded quickly, and we talk about slowing down while our calendars seem determined to make that impossible. But a quieter calendar isn't necessarily easier. The holidays can remind us of people we're missing, relationships that have changed, or the companionship we wish we had. And some of us genuinely love all the excitement Christmas brings! We don't always fit neatly into one category, either. You might be looking forward to Christmas and still dreading parts of it.

Advent makes room for all of it.

I've been looking at the stories we'll explore through the Jesse Tree this year, and I'm struck by how much uncertainty runs through them. Isaiah imagines new life growing out of a stump. David isn't even brought into the room when Samuel comes looking for a king. Miriam watches over her baby brother, hidden in a basket among the reeds. And Mary sings about God's promises for a different world, even as her own future is anything but certain.

It makes me wonder what I might be missing in my own life. What have I gotten so comfortable with that I no longer question it? And what am I so busy worrying about that I haven't noticed what's happening right in front of me?

Of course, sometimes the most faithful thing we can do is rest. But I also know how easy it is to call something rest when what I'm really doing is avoiding something I'd rather not deal with. Maybe that's part of the challenge of Advent: learning when to stay on the couch and when it's time to get up.

This year, our At Home Monastery devotional invites us to spend a little time paying attention to our lives and what we actually need.

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I imagine that will look different for everyone. You might realize you need to leave the dishes in the sink and go to bed. Or maybe there's someone you've been meaning to call, but too much time has passed and now it feels awkward. Perhaps you've been feeling lonely but haven't quite figured out how to tell anyone.

My hope is that these Advent practices won't become another obligation to squeeze into our days. We have enough of those. I'd rather we use them as opportunities to notice what's happening in our lives, listen for God, and think about whether there are things we might need to do differently.

I keep coming back to Isaiah's image of a new shoot growing out of a stump. It's such an unlikely place to look for life. A stump looks like the end of something, but Isaiah sees the possibility of a new beginning. I wonder where we've stopped looking for that kind of possibility in our own lives.

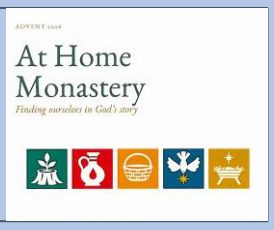
As for me, I'll probably still spend some evenings negotiating with my couch. But perhaps I'll get a little better at recognizing when I need those extra ten minutes and when it's time to get up.

May this Advent give us the wisdom to know the difference.

Grace and peace,
Paige Convis



At Home Monastery: During this busy season, we'd like to offer an opportunity to slow down and reflect on how we are invited to participate in God's story. Look for this year's devotional in the Welcome Center, the online devotional, and in our podcast.
Thanks to this year's writer, Paige Convis.



Eastridge financial update:
We need an average of $ 24,000 per week to make our 2026 budget goal. (For comparison, we took in $ 7,367.00 in general fund offerings the week of November 15).
Thank you for your gifts to the church!
See the last page of this newsletter for more info on our gift/fund match! Also, please turn in a pledge card so that our finance committee can plan a budget for 2027.



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Soup and Chili Lunch!

Do you have a favorite soup or chili recipe? Maybe one that's been handed down for generations. Maybe one that came from a Facebook reel. Maybe you love to try new recipes and want to share them with others.



Join us following worship on December 20 for a soup and chili lunch. We're providing the cinnamon rolls (it's a Nebraska must). We're feeding our faith community one bowl at a time!
If you'd like to bring a soup or chili (we need 8-9 crockpots), sign up here: https://bit.ly/soupadventepc. All are welcome to come and share in a pre-Christmas meal!



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. Since we have joined with First Presbyterian Youth Group, the number of Wednesdays that we will need dinner volunteers has been cut in half. This year, we will only need dinner volunteers for 14 Wednesdays. This covers the entire year!

If you are interested in serving, you can do this in several ways. It can be a group of people providing dinner, a couple of families getting together, or individuals. We feed around 12-14 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. Often times, you only need to ask one question and they will take it and run! If you would be willing to volunteer, you can sign up with the following link or QR code. https://bit.ly/26-27YGdinner
Thank you in advance for your support of our youth!

Per Capita/Denominational Giving:

For 2025 the assessed Per Capita is $ 38.54 per member of Eastridge.
However, if you are so called, a gift of $100 will help us cover our denominational funding obligations and assist those who may not be able to contribute towards this obligation.



LEFLER LION CHRISTMAS TREE: We are partnering with Lefler Middle School again this year for our annual Christmas "Angel Tree". To join in this outreach project: Remove an envelope from the tree. Purchase a gift card in the amount of $20, $25 or $50 at one of the following: Super Saver, Target, Hy-Vee, Walmart.
Place gift card in envelope.
Deliver envelope/gift card to the black mailbox outside the office door or give directly to Donna in the office by Dec. 25.

THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR HELPING THE FAMILIES OF LEFLER MIDDLE SCHOOL THIS CHRISTMAS!

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What Is an Interfaith Family?

Understanding and Recognizing the Complexities of Religious and Faith-Based Differences
Wednesday, December 9, 2026 | 12:00–1:00 p.m.
Eastridge Presbyterian Church, 1135 Eastridge Drive, Lincoln
In person and via Zoom, with Jordan Soliz, Professor and Chair of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln

What does it mean to be an interfaith family? We might think first of a marriage between people of different religious traditions. But interfaith families take many forms. Religious differences may exist between partners, parents and children, or other family members. They may involve different religions, differing beliefs and orientations within the same tradition, or changes in religious identity that emerge over time.
How do families navigate these differences? What happens when beliefs, rituals, customs, and traditions aren't shared by everyone? And what might the wider community learn from the ways families maintain relationships across religious differences?

Join the Faith Coalition of Lancaster County as we welcome Dr. Jordan Soliz, whose research explores communication, identity, and relationships across differences. This conversation is part of our 2026–27 series, What We Hold in Common, exploring what connects us across our differences and how we share life together. All are welcome! Our gatherings are open to everyone. Bring a brown bag lunch if you're joining us in person. Zoom participation is also available via lancasterfaith.org.





Poinsettia Order Form

If you wish to provide a Poinsettia for the church sanctuary for Advent, please complete this form and mail or bring payment to the church office by December 11. Make all checks payable to Eastridge Church noting on the check that it is for a Poinsettia. **(Please return check with this form.)**
Please state exactly how you want your contribution printed in the bulletin.

Donated by _____
In memory of _____
In honor of _____
No. of flowers _____ Poinsettia cost $18.00 each Total _____
I wish my Poinsettia to be taken to a church member. _____
I will pick up my Poinsettia after the Worship services on Christmas Eve_____

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Session Highlights November 8, 2026

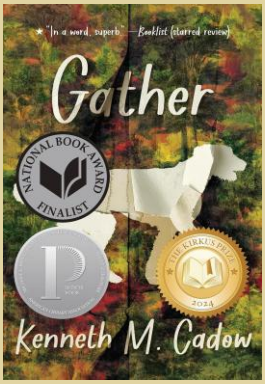
- Acknowledged Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the memorial service of Douglas Reimer at Van Dorn Villa on 10-17-26.
- Motion approved to recommend 3% pay raises for both Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon and Rev. Thomas Dummermuth subject to budget funding.
- Rev. Thomas Dummermuth led a discussion on the Lent and Easter series from the books "Into the Mess and Other Jesus Stories," a journey through Mark, and "The Holy Spirit" by Adam Hamilton.
- A meeting (two Eastridge trustees present) was held with Dave Holtzclaw, a mechanical structural engineer, to review the building needs. Immediate projects are new windows and HVAC (fellowship hall and narthex). Mr. Holtzclaw will issue a report and plan for the future.
- Steve Anderson and Rev. Dr. Melodie Jones Pointon met with Presbytery Treasurer, Ed McClymont, and Joyce Douglas from Westminster with a proposal to pay 4% of our 2025 general fund actual giving in lieu of per capital assessment for 2027. The 4 % denominational giving proposal falls within $200 of the per capita assessment. The Presbytery has approved this proposal.
- Thank you received from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for $1,000 donation to US Wildfire relief.
- Congregational Meeting is November 22, 2026.
- Presbytery meeting is November 19, 10:00 a.m. Bill Wehrbein and Susan Budler will attend.





This year **Eastridge Presbyterian Women will host a cookie fellowship** instead of a sale! Join us on Sunday, December 13 to share coffee, cookies, fellowship in the Welcome Center.

If you'd like to contribute cookies for this event, please bring them to M12 that morning.



EPC Book Club:

For January, we'll read ***Gather*** **by Kenneth M Cadew**. Join us on Monday, January 11 at 7:00 pm in M12 for discussion and refreshments!

The EPC Book Club is open to everyone. We typically choose the year's picks in advance and books are chosen by vote from the group. Let the office know if you'd like to join or find out more!

For more information, contact the office or check out the entire year's list on our website.

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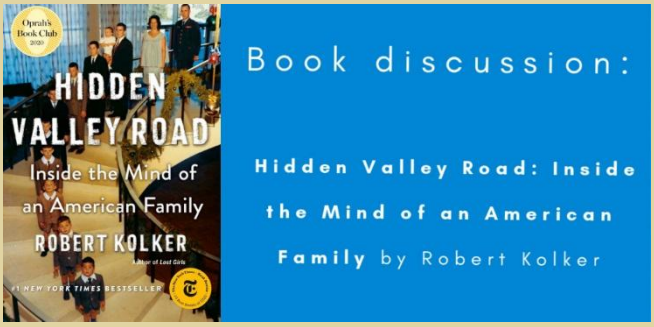
Join us at Eastridge Presbyterian Church for a **book discussion *of Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family* by Robert Kolker.**

Don and Mimi Galvin seemed to be living the American dream. After World War II, Don's work with the Air Force brought them to Colorado, where their twelve children perfectly spanned the baby boom: the oldest born in 1945, the youngest in 1965. In those years, there was an established script for a family like the Galvins--aspiration, hard work, upward mobility, domestic harmony--and they worked hard to play their parts. But behind the scenes was a different story: by the mid-1970s, six of the ten Galvin boys, one after another, were diagnosed as schizophrenic. How could all this happen to one family? What took place inside the house on Hidden Valley Road was so extraordinary that the Galvins became one of the first families to be studied by the National Institute of Mental Health. With clarity and compassion, bestselling and award-winning author Robert Kolker uncovers one family's unforgettable legacy of suffering, love, and hope.

We'll meet Monday, December 7 at 7:00 pm in M12. Expect discussion of the book and themes it addresses, plus light appetizers! Sign up is encouraged but not required!

View sign up here: https://bit.ly/hiddenvalleydiscussionepc



Children's Worship Area

We have made it through the first few months of our new children's worship area and the children LOVE it! We have found they have been participating in worship in new and different ways. We have designed this new space specifically for our Kindergarten thru 5th graders. Our time in this area begins with the Worship Connection. Following the Worship Connection, there are activities for the elementary aged children to engage in that will help them experience the topic of the sermon. Following the sermon, children are invited to return to the pew with their family so they can finish worship with them.

In addition to our children's worship area, we would also like to share other areas in and around the sanctuary that we are working on to make places and spaces for our children and families to participate. We are excited about the possibilities. To help all in attendance learn about these spaces, they will be highlighted with the pew card shown at right so all will know what is available. Look for these in the coming weeks to appear in the pews.



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Cookie Decorating Sunday, December 6!



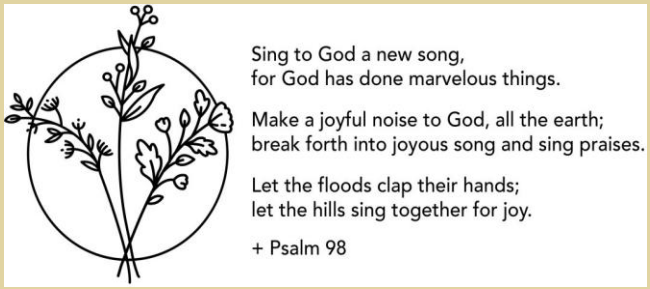
Christmas cookie decorating is a tradition for some and yummy for all. Following worship on December 6 everyone will have an opportunity to decorate a sugar cookie. Your decorations can share something about your family tree, be a work of art, or just taste amazing!

ADVENT STUDY:



Join the Wednesday morning Bible Study group as we begin *The Advent Tree* by Kara Eidson as our study during Advent. This group meets Wednesday mornings at 10:30 am and is led by Donna Gustafson.

STEWARDSHIP SEASON:
The Psalmist writes,
"let the hills sing Together for Joy." We have mailed estimate of giving cards for 2027. Filling out a card helps our Finance Team build a budget that reflects our priorities and values for the upcoming year.
We are currently collecting pledge cards.
Thank you for filling out a card!



Annual Calendar fundraiser:



This year's nature calendar fundraiser will benefit the Eastridge choral scholar ministry.

Look for a sign up soon! Please leave payment in the office inbox.

McGuire Family Christmas Carols – December 21



McGuire Family Christmas Carols (streamed on Facebook and Youtube) in partnership with The Coffee Roaster and Basement Creators Network. Look for more info in an upcoming bulletin, Facebook, and email!

Sign up in 2027!



Look for new sign-ups soon for The Gathering Place soup kitchen, communion prep, ushering on Sundays, snacks for coffee hour on Sunday mornings, flowers for the sanctuary, and more as we start a new year.

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Winter Wanders: Beneath the Bare Branches

This Advent, the Jesse Tree invites us to imagine new life emerging from an old stump—an unlikely place to look for it. What might we discover when we look more closely at the winter landscape—even when it seems like nothing is happening?



Join Pastor Thomas for an unhurried winter walk, with pauses to listen, look closely, and make room for surprise. Among bare branches, winter birds, and signs of other creatures, we'll notice what is happening around us—and our place within it.

Sunday, December 20, 3–4 p.m. A winter wander near the shortest day of the year.

Sunday, January 3, 3–4 p.m. A winter wander to welcome the new year with curiosity and attention.

Come to either or both. No nature expertise is needed—just curiosity and clothing suited to the weather. We anticipate meeting at the historic Epworth arch in Wilderness Park; the location may change depending on trail conditions. **Please RSVP here: https://tinyurl.com/winterwander26 to receive the confirmed meeting point and any weather updates.**

Advent at EPC:

9:30 am worship every Sunday with special music every week onsite and online
December 6 - cookie decorating; December 13 - cookie fellowship (EPW); **December 20 - Chili/Soup Lunch**
December 21 McGuire Family Christmas Carols (streamed on Facebook and Youtube) in partnership with The Coffee Roaster and Basement Creators Network
At Home Monastery - find this special devotional in our Eastridge Presbyterian e-Devotional; paper copies available in the Welcome Center; podcast available on our Facebook and YouTube pages or wherever you get your podcasts.

Join us for
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services



5 pm family service
led by Children and Youth

7 pm traditional service
led by Chancel Choir and
Kirk Ringers

Music in Advent:

Nov. 29 - Sarah and Joel Herrera
Dec. 6 - Saxophonist Bob Fuson, Madeline McGuire with our choir
Dec. 13 - Choir and Bells
Dec. 20 - Brandon Baker singing from Handel's Messiah, choir singing *O Holy Night* with Kristen Unterseher on violin.



FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE: "In the Blink of an Eye: Open someone's eyes"
No matter how you say it, the ability to see clearly can change someone's life. EPC is collecting gently used prescription eyeglasses and UV resistant sunglasses for a mission trip to Kenya. Place your donations in the designated boxes in the welcome center before Dec. 31.



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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

THANK YOU to everyone who shopped the **Handspoken (formerly Ten Thousand Villages)** sale!

It was a huge success. In addition to supporting the work of artisans around the world, and their handmade works, the youth will receive funds from the sale that will go toward the summer mission trip. We are still in the planning stage for our summer trip and will share our location and mission after the new year.

HANDSPOKEN FAIR TRADE

FUND MATCH:

For the SEVENTH year in a row we have been given a matching gift for our general fund through a generous anonymous donor.

This year the gift is $12,000!

We are thankful for this generous gift as we enter the season of gratitude, as it encourages giving to the mission and ministry of Eastridge. Please note "fund match" in the memo line (or in the comment section if giving online). You may also email the office to let us know if an online donation is coming from you toward the fund match. **To-date: $ 7,900 toward match.**



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1135 Eastridge Drive
Lincoln NE 68510



Instagram twitter Like us on Facebook