

EASTRIDGE

Presbyterian Church



Preacher and scholar Barbara Brown Taylor said, “Most of us spend so much time thinking about where we have been or where we are supposed to be going that we have a hard time recognizing where we actually are.”¹ I suppose I think of summer as that time when we focus on where we are. At my house it's a season of in-betweens that means we don't really have anywhere we *have* to be. Instead, we find places we *want* to be. Maybe it's a spot on a lake or a river here in Nebraska or there in Minnesota. Maybe it's a ballfield or an open road on a bike or in a car. Maybe it's on a trail walking or running or taking pictures. Maybe it's in a hammock in your backyard or sitting on your front porch. As we find physical spaces we *want* to be, hopefully we are able to reflect on where we are.

As the faith community of Eastridge Presbyterian Church, we are spending time together intentionally noticing where we are now. Now that we have celebrated 70 years and received the Leaderwise Bridgebuilder report. Now that the session has made some key discernments and we are able to gather information.

You will notice in the Session Highlights a few of these discernments:

First, the Worship and Music Advisory Committee will be gathering information regarding the time of the ONE Sunday worship service. In April, when the session originally set one service, it was open-ended and set at 10 am. This was to encourage fellowship before and after the service and (particularly in August) to provide space for conversation. I was touched by the openness of the session to not put a time frame on this one service schedule. Worship and Music received some feedback that the faith community would like to be consulted before a more regular schedule of one service would be set. A short survey will be sent out via e-mail and on Sunday asking participants which service they attended and what time they would most like to attend worship starting this fall.

Second, the session voted to establish three task forces following their review of the Leaderwise report:

1. A task force to consider restructuring the boards of the church. We currently have 54 leadership spots on our 4 boards, with an average worship attendance of 95 in person and 22 screens online. We estimate that roughly 130 people worship with our community every week, meaning that 1/2 of our weekly attendance is needed to fill our boards. We wonder what

¹ <https://thedewdrop.org/2023/01/27/the-path-that-goes-nowhere-barbara-brown-taylor-on-the-practice-of-labyrinth-walking/>

we might be able to do as a community if our board structure looked different and required fewer elected leaders. Co-chairs: Robin Hadfield and George Kilpatrick.

2. A task force to consider membership and belonging. This is a question many communities are asking, especially as we embrace our digital footprint. What does it mean to be a member of this community? How do we reach out and involve those members? Who can be a member? How do we embrace those who are no longer part of this community? Co-chairs: Chris Boden and Hope Shortridge.

3. A task force to consider the other recommendations and wonderings from the Leaderwise report, including but not limited to: how can the communities that gather on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays bless each other; in what ways do our staff job descriptions need to be changed to better reflect their roles as resources to the faith community; and what other recommendations and wonderings need to be considered. Co-chairs: Alinda Stelk and Carolyn Brandle.

If you are interested in serving on any of these task forces, please contact the co-chairs directly or leave your name in the office. Task forces will intentionally hold space for different voices and viewpoints.

Third, the session approved the choir director job description as written by the choir director search committee and recommended by the personnel committee. This is an important step forward in our search for the person God is calling to be our next choir director! We will advertise on appropriate job search sites, through current organizations, and through personal networks. The search committee: Kris Brenneis, Worship and Music Elder; Diane Worrell-Eaton, Chancel Choir; Bill Reichert, Kirks Ringers; Heather Wherry, Personnel (co-opted); Tena Whiston, at-large; Mia Olsen, youth; Thomas Dummermuth and Melodie Jones Pointon (ex-officio - with voice no vote).

Friends, this is a lot of looking where we are right now, considering the ground on which we are currently standing. I give thanks for our past journey that has led us to where we are right now, and look eagerly for what we are being called to be in the future. Where we are - it is a sacred, holy place. I am thankful to be here with you!

In the name of the One Who Sees us,

Pastor Melodie