



FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN:

I love that MaryAnn McKibben Dana shares the following story in her book, *Hope: A User's Manual*: "A teenager was preparing to go through the confirmation process, the Christian rite of passage in which young people claim their faith as their own, independent of their parents. She went to her father, who happened to be the pastor, and said she wasn't sure she believed everything she was supposed to believe. She still had lots of questions and doubts. Her father said, 'What you promise when you are confirmed is not that you will believe this forever. What you promise when you are confirmed is that this is the story you will wrestle with forever.'" As we move from our exploration of hope, it seemed appropriate to enter Lent as a time for seeking.

This Lent we will be using resources from *A Sanctified Art*, a group of pastors who are artists, songwriters, poets, and theologians. While initially drawn to the large number of resources available, we are also excited about exploring these texts from the Revised Common Lectionary and their theme of Seeking: Honest Questions for a Deeper Faith. Founding creative partner, Rev. Lauren Wright-Pitmann describes how the theme of seeking and questions came about. She writes, "Brainstorming for this Lent's theme was especially frustrating for me. I spent weeks trying to get a grip on words or phrases that encapsulated the energy of these profound questions from the texts. At first glance, some of the questions seem very simple, but once you peel back a layer, they turn into those kind of life-long existential questions. In some ways the questions are forward-thinking and in other ways they are retrospective. The questions are



introspective and individual while at the same time outward-facing and collective. I found myself in a kind of confusing dance trying to figure out a perfect way to neatly package this sense of reaching out, poking holes, lamenting, feeling the edge of clarity, missing the point... etc. The word 'seeking' surfaced pretty early on in our planning—but seeking what? I wanted to know what we were searching for. However, it became clear that the object of the seeking wasn't the point; it was the journey of seeking that we were trying to grasp. This theme is about being raw and honest in our questioning, our doubts, our fears, our confusion, our discoveries—and in that process, unveiling a more authentic, rooted faith. It

is in our seeking that we journey alongside the Man of Sorrows, and ultimately, find the sunrise."

And so, we invite you to fulfill that promise you made to follow the teacher, leader, Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, seeking, asking, knocking on that quest to be drawn deeper into the

love of God for us. We have a variety of tools at our disposal - devotional booklets, prayer cards, worship services, midweek meals, Bible study. The invitation is to enter the Biblical texts as individuals or as a group, all the while knowing that our seeking may bring more questions than answers. That's okay, whether you are 9 or 99. It's the journey and the sunrise that will ultimately lead us to discover the Risen Son.

~ Melodie

Lauren F. Winner, *Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis* (New York: Harper One, 2013) - as recounted in Dana, MaryAnn McKibben. *Hope: A User's Manual* (p. 106). Eerdmans. Kindle Edition.



Ash Wednesday Dinner and Service:

Dinner at 6 pm in the Huxtable Lounge - Breakfast Casserole Potluck

Worship at 6:30 in the Sanctuary. Service will be streamed, and ashes will be available in the Welcome Center.

All Lenten devotional info can be mailed upon request.



Some updates from The Gathering Place:

Update 1:

Good news for groups who have been waiting years to provide the meal again – we're excited to welcome back the option of volunteers bringing dinner! Groups who used to bring the meal are welcome to do so once again. If you haven't done this before, but would like to begin the conversation, we're happy to have your help! We'd also be open to groups only providing the main dish, sides, or dessert. If you'd like to bring food on your assigned night, please give Lisa at least 2 weeks notice. When you tell us you want to provide the meal, we will let you know how many people to prepare for. We're currently feeding 100-200 people per night. There is NO pressure or expectation to bring meals, whether or not you have done so in the past.

Update 2:

Thank you for bearing with us as we adjust our processes to best fit the needs of our guests. We've had some questions about going back to trays to serve dinner, but we've found that guests prefer the to-go box meals. To-go boxes, which are eco-friendly, allow the line to move much quicker so our guests don't spend time standing in line while hungry. With this method we've seen less irritability in line, and more laughter and joyful conversation. It also gives our guests the flexibility to eat

wherever they choose. This process may not always look like this, but we appreciate your willingness to be adaptable and flexible as we figure out what works best for our guests.

Update 3:

Just a reminder to only bring 4-5 volunteers per night. Five is the ideal number, but we can get by with 4. Any more than 5 is too many.

Update 4:

We are again collecting winter items for our Gathering Place guests for our Warm Hands, Warm Hearts donation drive. You can bring these items to our Community Action office at 210 O St. or to the Gathering Place when you volunteer. Let's make sure our guests stay warm this winter!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or Lisa (ljanssen@communityactionatwork.org or 402-476-7398)

Thank you for being a Gathering Place volunteer! We appreciate you!





OUTREACH

"... What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

Is there a difference between "kindness" and "justice"?*

Kindness (sometimes called charity or mercy) is an act of generosity resulting from some people's good will, which can be withdrawn whenever they choose. It is often a private or individual act that responds to an immediate need by providing food, clothing, or shelter. It is generally noncontroversial and the reward for both the giver and the receiver is direct and immediate. Examples of kindness are homeless shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens, and donations to good causes.

Justice is based on fairness: what people deserve, and results when social structures recognize human needs and rights. It addresses long-term conditions and promotes changes in social institutions. It is typically a public and a political act, with less direct reward for the doer and often slow to achieve an outcome. It is sometimes

controversial, and results are often difficult to measure. Examples of justice include changes in policies, practices, or the law. Advocacy for change may require writing letters to officials or to the newspaper editor, public speaking, face-to-face meetings with those in positions of power and authority, and other political actions.

Kindness and justice are complementary: "Justice without love is tyranny, and love without justice is sentimentality." (attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr)

I'll tell you what it really means to worship the LORD.

Remove the chains of prisoners who are bound unjustly.

Free those who are abused!

Share your food with everyone who is hungry;

share your home with the poor and homeless.

Give clothes to those in need; don't turn away your relatives.

Isaiah 58:6-7 Contemporary English Version (1995)

*Based on the presentation "Covenant Community" by Timothy Shaw

Justice in Action is an interfaith justice coalition of 20 faith communities in Lincoln/Lancaster County.

We are gearing up for our first ever Nehemiah Action Rally on MAY 4th.

We will gather 1,200 people to present our research and ask our public officials to adopt our proposals on Criminal Justice Reform & Mental Health Issues.

The justice team at Eastridge will be reaching out to you in the next few weeks to invite you to join this effort.





SESSION HIGHLIGHTS:

The Session approved the minutes of the Session meeting of December 8, 2022.

The Session acknowledged that communion was served at the 9 p.m. service on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2022, and at the 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services on January 1, 2023.

The Session approved the Necrology Report.

The Session approved the communion schedule for 2023: first Sunday of each month, Maundy Thursday, and Christmas Eve.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Thomas Dummermuth officiated at the funeral service of Gerald Poppe on December 10, 2022, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon officiated at the memorial service of Sandra Orr on December 14, 2022, at Eastridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dummermuth officiated at the funeral service of Charlotte Bourne on December 27, 2022.

The Session acknowledged that the Rev. Dr. Jones Pointon officiated at the funeral service of Joseph Weitzel on January 6, 2023.

A motion was carried to schedule one service of worship at 10 a.m. on Youth Sunday, February 12, 2023.

A motion was carried to adopt the 2023 budget as presented. It will be presented to the congregation at the Congregational and Corporation Meeting on January 29, 2023.

A motion was carried to approve the draft Annual Report as amended.

The Session received the Homestead Presbytery Strategic Plan Engagement Guide. The finalized plan will be presented to the Homestead

Presbytery Assembly on February 18, 2023, for a final vote.

A written financial report was received. The 2022 accounts ended up with a \$3,000 surplus. Thanks were offered to Shirley Flynn Bell for serving as interim treasurer.



LENT: Watch for our Lenten resources, available beginning February 19 in the Welcome Center!

Sign up to usher in 2023! The current sign up is updated with dates for this year. Typically, three ushers needed per Sunday. Check it out here: <https://bit.ly/epcnewusher>





“An eye feels like a recognizable and even predictable image for the general theme of Seeking, however, there is nothing all that simple or straightforward about this Lenten theme. As I studied the texts, I found there was repetition in visual imagery that held the texts together. As I sketched, the logo became layered with imagery that formed more shapes and meaning, sometimes obscuring and revealing more as I went. It was a balance of maintaining the legibility and clarity that is necessary in a logo, while connecting to a theme that is about being unable to find understanding or even tangibility. I wanted the logo at first glance to be somewhat obvious, but at closer inspection, I wanted it to expand, confuse, and surprise. The viewing of the logo itself is a process of seeking meaning.”

— Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, designer of the theme logo and branding



seeking:

honest questions
for deeper faith

Join us
Wednesdays this
Lent from 6–7 pm
in the Huxtable
Lounge for dinner
and reflection
around the table.

Agape Meal



Feb 22 (Ash Wednesday) -
Breakfast Casserole
March 1 - Crock Pot Meal
March - 8 Pizza Night
March 15 - Pie Day
March - 22 Potluck
March 29 - Holiday Meal (ham
provided, bring your favorite
Easter side or dessert)

*All meals are 'potluck' - but your
presence is more important than
the food you bring!



MINISTRY WITH YOUTH




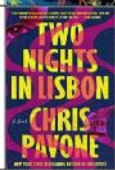
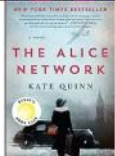
Faith Connection for Youth:

Sunday, February 12th, the Middle School and High School youth will lead us in one service of worship at 10:00am. Worship will focus on hope and how we can continue to have hope even when it doesn't feel like there is any left. During the service, the youth will share their work with you as they have written the prayers and liturgy along with four of the youth who will share the sermon for the day. We hope you will choose to join us for this special service of worship.

In addition to Youth Sunday on the 12th, the youth will collect the Souper Bowl of Caring offering. This offering was developed by a Presbyterian youth group in South Carolina 30+ years ago. At that first offering collections, the youth asked the congregation to give a dollar or two to aid in "tackling" hunger for the city's homeless population. 30 years and several thousand churches/organizations later, the Souper Bowl of Caring has collected millions of dollars to help feed those who are hungry.

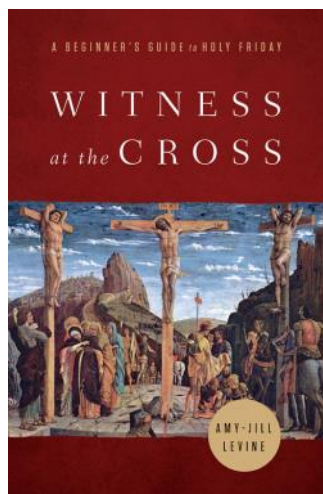
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Upcoming EPC Book Club picks for the spring 2023 session!

<div>EASTRIDGE Presbyterian Church</div> 			
March 13		<i>Violeta</i> by Isabel Allende	Discussion & refreshments: Donna Gustafson
April 10		<i>The Island of Sea Women</i> by Lisa See	Discussion & refreshments: Susan Taylor
May 8		<i>Two Nights in Lisbon</i> by Chris Pavone	Discussion & refreshments: Judith Keller
June 12		<i>The Alice Network</i> by Kate Quinn	Discussion & refreshments: Kris Brenneis

This year, EPC youth will like to do something different to support the food pantry at EPC. We are going to ask you to vote for who you think will win the Super Bowl based on the item that you bring. **If you think the Kansas City Chiefs will win, we would like you to vote for them by bringing shampoo and/or conditioner. If you think the Philadelphia Eagles will win, we would like you to vote for them by bringing cleaning supplies.** Let's see if EPC can correctly pick the Super Bowl winner as well as stock the pantry with personal hygiene products and cleaning supplies!

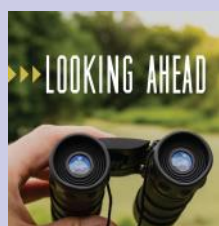




Thursday morning Zoom Bible Study!

Experience Holy Friday from the perspective of those who watched Jesus die: Mary his mother; the Beloved Disciple from the Gospel of John; Mary Magdalene and the other women from Galilee; the two men, usually identified as thieves, crucified with Jesus; the centurion and the soldiers; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Jews and Romans, friends and strangers, the powerful and the powerless, the hopeful and the despairing. The story of Jesus's death is not something we just read: we think about it, and we experience it; we hear the taunts of the soldiers, the priests, and the passersby even as we hear the famous "seven last words" from the cross.

Thursday mornings at 10 am on Zoom, led by Pastor Melodie. Sign up to come!



Eastridge is planning some church visioning... Look for more info to come.

It is a time of learning and discerning; a time of looking at the past, who Eastridge has been, and what

Eastridge has experienced; a time of dreaming and stretching as we wonder together about the future. The History Event will be very interactive. The Learning Event will include a time of teaching, small group discussion, and large group discovery.

Sign up to serve a meal to the youth!

We are looking for folks who are willing to provide and serve dinner. You might be interested in serving individually or you might get a group together to provide dinner. At this time, we will be serving around 15. You can use the following link for a list of dates and to sign up.

<https://bit.ly/YGdinner>



The Sunrise Road Podcast

Can be found on all major podcast platforms, beginning the week of January 15 (exact date to come).

We are excited and honored by our inaugural six session series on Hope, inspired by the book Hope: A User's Manual by MaryAnn McKibben Dana

Week One: What hope is, and what hope is not: A conversation with author Mary Ann McKibben Dana

Week Two: Hope lives in the body: A conversation with Mary Pipher, international best-selling author, local psychiatrist, and friend of our community

Week Three: Hope travels in story: Judy Hart/Timothy Scholl

Week Four: The practice of hope: A conversation with Ben MacConnell, community organizer and justice seeker

Week Five: Hope endures: Fr. Robert Magoola, St. Mark's on the Campus Episcopal Church.

Epilogue: Pastor's Thomas and Melodie answer questions, hear from listeners, and discuss what moved them



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.

A sign up for 2023 is here: <https://bit.ly/TheGatheringPlace2023>



Trailblazers for February: We will gather at 7:00 p.m. on February 17 in Huxtable Lounge

Speaker: Jim McGee: **"Haymarket"**. Committee: Filbrandt, Thompson, Kilian

For more info on Trailblazers, contact the church office.

JOIN US FOR WRAP TRAINING!

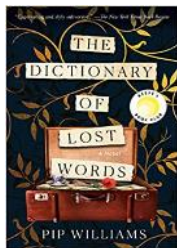
How to Handle Emotional and Spiritual Fatigue?
Just Learn to WRAP®

Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) is a powerful set of tools to help us care for others and ourselves and is an evidence-based practice.

A multiple-hour seminar is not a magic solution, but it can be a major positive step. Participants in WRAP training create a personalized system of wellness tools and action plans. It helps people use sound mental health and spiritual principles to achieve a self-directed wellness vision that manages life's daily challenges. People use these tools for a lifetime!

Join us February 19 and 26, right after 9:00 worship (10:00 am - 12:00 pm).
Caramel rolls, fruit, biscotti and beverages provided! We'll meet in M12 on the 19th and Huxtable on the 26th.

View the sign up here! <https://bit.ly/WRAPtrainingEPC>



EPC Book Club: Join us on Monday, February 13 as we discuss the book *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams.

We meet each month during the school year for discussion and refreshments in the Conference Room at Eastridge!



New Member Orientation:

If you are interested in joining Eastridge and/or just want to

get to know more, please plan to join Pastor Thomas February 23 at 5:30 pm in Huxtable Lounge. Please email the office if you plan to attend (office@eastridge.org). Light meal provided!

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 to receive a prompt and the link five days a week via email, let the office know as well.



Copies of the Annual Report are available at the Welcome Desk. You may also find a short version on the Eastridge website, on the main page.



Annual Report

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
Dr. Brian Lew.....Director of Music Ministries
Brent Shaw.....Organist
Will McGuire.....Worship Leader
Vince Ruhl.....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

FOR VOLUNTEERS: Sign ups for February are below. For more information on volunteering, contact the church office.

Wednesday and Sunday Distribution:

<https://bit.ly/FPFebDist>

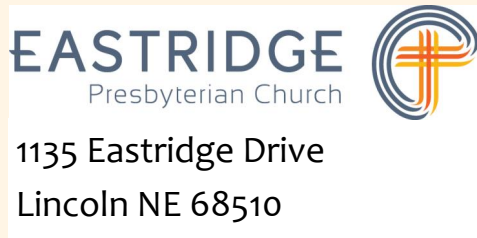
Filling boxes:

<https://bit.ly/FPFebFill>



Fourth Friday Women's Coffee:

On the fourth Friday of each month, join this (mostly) retired group of ladies that meet in Huxtable Lounge here at Eastridge for coffee at 8:30 am. Join us February 24!



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