



# Birthdays



- |                   |                   |                    |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Ginger Thompson | 12 Rose Armsworth | 20 Anna McKay      |
| 6 Neill Murphy    | 13 Dan Gibbs      | 27 Mike Cate       |
| 7 Lisa Osborne    | 14 Bette Brasher  | 28 Robbie Levering |
| 10 Eva Lynch      | 17 David McKay    | 28 Harter Crisp    |

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY!

Visit us at: [www.erinpres.org](http://www.erinpres.org) to catch up on news, make an offering, and read John's devotion!

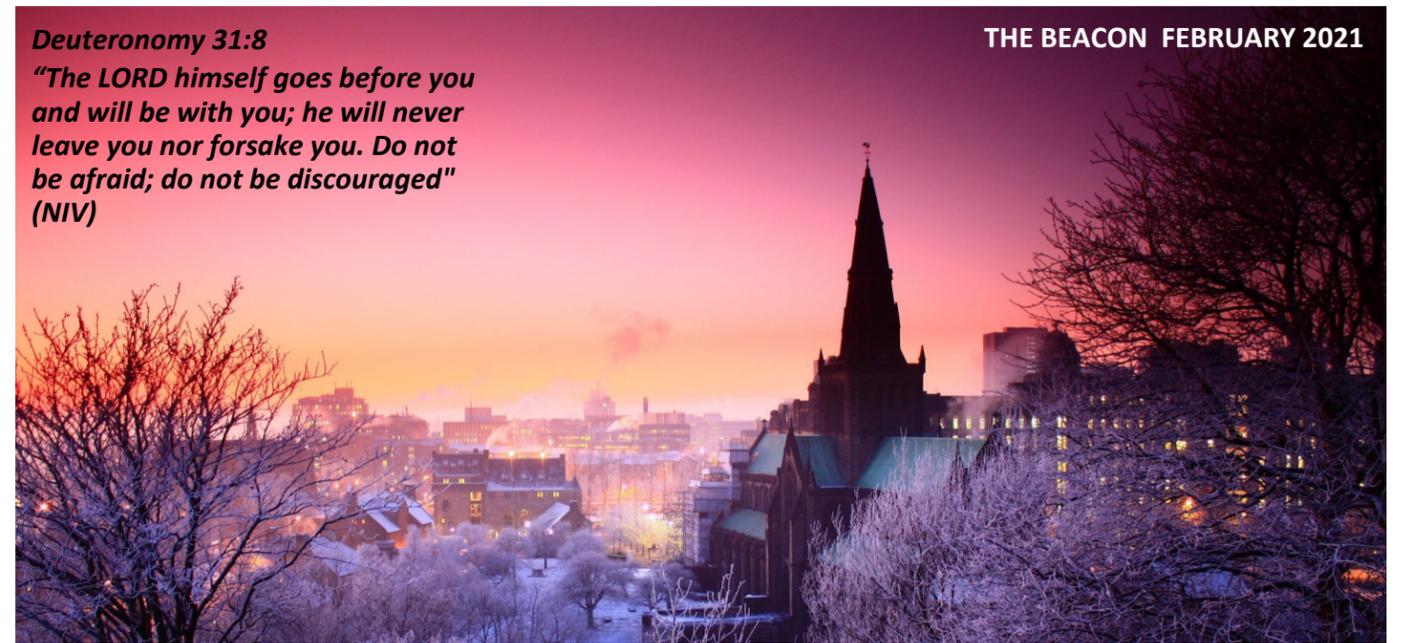
TO:

Erin Presbyterian Church  
200 Lockett Rd. Knoxville, TN 37919  
865.588.5350 [www.erinpres.org](http://www.erinpres.org)

Deuteronomy 31:8

*"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (NIV)*

THE BEACON FEBRUARY 2021



Dear Friends,  
Last February, I was in Scotland celebrating the marriage of my nephew, Ewan. I had gotten over my fear of flying and it was the first time in sixteen years that I had been with my entire family. It was a wonderful celebration, but it was weird, too. The pandemic had just broken out and no one knew what lay before us. On my return flight, I was amazed to see how empty my plane was – only 20% of the seats were filled. It was the beginning of a very surrealistic year for all of us.

If someone had told me back then that the church building would be off limits for worship and that our congregation would have to produce pre-recorded services, I would have said they were crazy. I still find it hard to accept, but I am thankful to God for providing us with the right people and resources to help us through this challenging time. The whole experience has reminded me of something that an old Scottish Professor once told our practical theology class. He had been a prisoner of war in Stalag Luft III, the very camp that the movie "The Great Escape" was based on. Professor MacDonald was one of the British chaplains who had been captured with other Allied troops. He told us that intelligent people can always adapt to their circumstances in order to survive. He saw it happen every day in the POW camp. I did not fully understand what he meant back then, but now I know. After experiencing the many wonderful ways that faithful people in our church have responded to our present predicament, I see clearly now what Professor MacDonald was trying to teach us way back then.

So, where do we go from here? What new things do we need to learn and apply in order to keep connected to God and one another?

Well, firstly, we need to keep producing the pre-recorded worship services. Many of you have positively commented on our weekly worship programs. Some of you have also shared the video links with family members and friends all over the United States. We even have some folks from Scotland who regularly watch our Sunday services!

Secondly, we'll keep trying to present live outdoor services at 11:00 AM in our parking lot, especially when the weather gets warmer. At the moment, it is too cold to do this most Sundays, but Spring is just around the corner.

Thirdly, you'll soon be getting information about what I call 'parish pods' which involves the grouping of 8-10 member households, who all live near one another, to become an effective and encouraging support group for our church members and regular visitors. The purpose of the pods is to help us cope, endure, and overcome the isolation and spiritual exhaustion that this pandemic has caused.

I hope and pray that things will get better for all of us. A year ago, we had no idea what was coming; perhaps, during this year, we will get back together to praise God in our beloved sanctuary and give Him thanks for helping us through this remarkable time.

**May God bless, protect, and prosper you and all your loved ones.**

- Pastor John

# Connections

## CONNECTIONS CLASS

Every Sunday, Pastor Stuart teaches a Sunday school class called 'Connections'. At the moment, because of the Pandemic, it is taking place online via zoom.

The classes focus on Bible passages. Pastor Stuart teaches on the background of the events, as well as commenting on some of the special words from Hebrew and Greek.

The class discusses the passage and offers suggestions about how to apply the lesson in practical ways.

If you want to build up both your faith and Bible knowledge, this is an ideal class to do both. It lasts about 50 minutes and begins at 9:10 AM On Sunday mornings. If you would like to join or sample the class, just send an email to April, our administrator, at [admin@erinpresbyterian.org](mailto:admin@erinpresbyterian.org) and she will add your email address to the Connections Class list.

Pastor Stuart usually sends out the lesson on

Thursdays or Fridays with the Bible text and questions for discussion. You are welcome to join the class on any given Sunday.

## SERVICE UPDATE FROM SESSION

Because of the continued high numbers of risk in Knoxville and with winter weather setting in, Pastor Stuart asked the elders to only have online services on Sundays till the end of February. Perhaps by that time, the coronavirus will have diminished in this area.



## FEBRUARY EVENTS

### SUNDAYS

- 9:30am Online Worship Service
- 9:15am Connections Zoom
- 9:30am Hard Sayings Zoom
- 9:30am Living in Faith Zoom
- 9:30am HS SS Zoom
- 9:30am MS SS Zoom
- 9:30am Children's SS Zoom
- 5pm Middle School Youth Group

### MONDAYS

5pm High School Youth Group

### WEDNESDAYS

- 6pm Journey 7
- 6:25pm Sonshine Zoom
- 6:30pm BridgeBuilders Zoom

### THURSDAYS

7pm Session Meeting  
(1st & 3rd Thursdays of month)

### FRIDAYS

12pm Staff Zoom Mtg

### SATURDAYS

10:30am Journey 7

### INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEETINGS

- 1st** 6pm Property, 7pm Worship
- 2nd** 7pm Fellowship & Discipleship
- 7th** 12pm Stewardship & Outreach  
12:30pm CEX
- 13th** 12pm Outreach Zoom
- 14th** **Valentine's Day**
- 15th** 7pm MIT Zoom
- 21st** 12:30pm OH&C  
2pm Vis. Follow-up
- 21st** 7pm MIT Zoom

# February Volunteers

	FEBRUARY 7TH	FEBRUARY 14TH	FEBRUARY 21ST	FEBRUARY 28TH
GUIDE	Cathy Van Ostrand Kelly Boyd	Yvette and Lizzie Freter	Randy and Kellan Sarles	Suzanne and Kelcey Levering
READER	Dave and Sara Leckie	Andy and Kelsey Sarles	Rickey and Erin McCallum	Robbie and Ella Levering
CHILDREN'S SERMON	John Stuart	Joy Bornhoeft	Kelly Boyd	Mary Virginia Paletta
BIRTHDAY VIDEO	Lisa Parker	Cathy Van Ostrand	Glenda King	Kelly Boyd

# WordPlayers

**THE ENDS WE SEEK**, by our own Ethan Norman, is a work of historical fiction, which moves between actual events in the 19th and 20th centuries. The play vividly and powerfully illustrates how major historical events - Lincoln's election and Emancipation Proclamation, as well as the movement for civil rights inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - impacted the lives of ordinary individuals and families. Scenes of daily life play out against a backdrop of history and lead us through moments where national, social, and political turmoil have lasting and powerful effects on ordinary families. With sharp dialogue, inspired by true stories, and with captivating musical interludes, **THE ENDS WE SEEK** personalizes and humanizes the experience of ordinary people swept

up in the events of history.

**Available to tour to schools and other venues as a live performance or video presentation.**

### Schedule of Free Public Performances

- **Sunday, Feb. 21** 4pm Fifth Avenue Baptist
- **Wednesday, Feb. 24** 9:40am Walters State Greeneville & 4pm in Sevierville
- **Thursday, Feb. 25** 9:40am Walters State, Morristown & 2pm Tazewell
- **Sunday, Feb. 28** 4pm One Life Church

This project is supported by the Tennessee Arts Commission through the Arts Builds Communities grant program.

# Things to Note...

## NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY: INTERCESSORY LIFE

Does God hear our prayers? How do we know? What if we've prayed for something for weeks, months, or even years and nothing has changed? If God knows everything already, does prayer even make a difference?

Last April, at the beginning of the pandemic, Seedbed Publishing offered their digital books for free to encourage Christians to spend their newfound time at home drawing closer to Christ. The Living the Faith Sunday school class will explore Seedbed's *Intercessory Life* during the 40 days of Lent. The study will include 15-minute daily readings and reflection followed by online discussions at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. The author is Dr. Maxie Dunnam, president emeritus of Asbury Theological Seminary, former editor of *The Upper Room*, a director of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, and a former senior pastor of Christ United Methodist Church, Memphis.

We usually connect "intercession" with prayer. We intercede with God for ourselves and for one another, drawing God's attention to specific people and circumstances. Intercessory life is where prayer and mission intersect, and according to the author, it's the life to which all Christ-followers are called. This is a study about prayer, but it's about much more. When we pray "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," we're praying for a different kind of world, one where Christ is in charge. We are then led to intercede for those who are not experiencing the things that characterize God's kingdom. But what is our role in God's kingdom here on earth?

If you want to learn more about this kind of prayer and its implications for your life, if you'd like to develop (or jump-start) a habit of daily study and reflection, and if you want to be part of a group that shares, grows, and prays together, please **join us on Sunday mornings beginning February 21**. Contact Joe Jaynes at [jtj@abacusarts.com](mailto:jtj@abacusarts.com) for a digital copy of the book and instructions for the online meetings.



## PILGRIMS TOGETHER

Our new study for Spring is *Pilgrims Together*, starting February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In our second BridgeBuilders study, participants will look at the four most prevalent types of Christian churches in America: mainline protestant (as represented by our own denomination), traditionally Black churches, Evangelical congregations, and Catholic churches.

Led by representative pastors and leaders, we will explore what it means to be a Catholic, an Evangelical, or a member of this or that mainline protestant church. We will also gain insight into why Christians, all reading the same Bible, often take widely different stances on ethical and social issues.

We will meet via Zoom beginning Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm. The class will continue for 9 weeks, concluding on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Our sessions will again be recorded and available to those who miss a class and want to watch later. The course is also open to interested friends or family members.

**Here's more good news!** There is still time to enroll!

(Note: If you previously enrolled via the link on our website, we regret that it was not working)

So please email me, Kellan Sarles, at [sarleskellan@gmail.com](mailto:sarleskellan@gmail.com) to enroll.

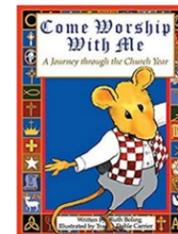
I will respond back with a confirmation.

I am excited about bridging another divide, this one with our Christian friends and neighbors! We encourage you to join the discussion and to pray for God's leading in this undertaking!

Kellan Sarles & Pastor John Stewart, co-moderators

# Family Ministry

*Come Worship with Me*  
*A Journey through the Church Year*  
By Ruth Boling



It's a new season in our church - Lent. We are waiting again, but this time we are waiting for Easter. We have to wait forty days!

Jesus waited in the wilderness once for forty days without eating or drinking anything. He prayed to God the whole time. He was tempted by the devil to give up, but he didn't. We must try very hard not to give up either.

Everyone seems quieter during Lent. Everyone thinks and everyone prays. When I pray I talk softly to God in my mind. Sometimes I talk out loud. Sometimes I thank God for things and sometimes I ask God to be with people who are lonely or afraid. Even the songs we sing in church are prayers. Did you know that? During Lent, I always ask God to help me keep my promises.

Our pastor says praying isn't just for church. We can pray at home, at school, before meals, at bedtime, and even on our way to soccer. The Bible says, "Pray at all times."



Join us for Sunday School each week on Zoom at 9:30 am. This month, we will continue to explore key moments of Jesus' ministry - his teachings, miracles, and healings.

February 21<sup>st</sup> is the first Sunday in Lent - a season of preparation, prayer, and repentance. As we study our lessons from the *Growing in God's Grace and Gratitude* curriculum, we also will talk about the importance of Lent, Lenten symbols and practices. February Sunday School kits will be mailed out on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>. So join us on Zoom each week as we journey through this holy season together.

## Children's Lenten Calendars



Encourage your children to follow and grow closer to Jesus each day of Lent using this colorful one-page calendar. Calendars will be mailed out to all elementary families in early February, just in time for Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17).

This calendar is filled with prayers, thought-starters, activities and Bible verse suggestions for each day. Post it on your fridge or family bulletin board and follow along as we journey together through 40 days of Lent!



# Outreach



## THANK YOU FROM SUNSET GAP

Thanks to all who contributed to our mission projects and collections that we held over the holiday season. We had a large load of boxes taken to Sunset Gap, and they were most appreciative of our help!

There is a **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY** event that is taking place with our East TN Presbytery, and being led by Katina Sharp, the Reverend at Powell Presbyterian. If you are interested in participating or supporting financially, please contact Katina at (865) 938-8311.

We are going to have a **LENT COLLECTION BOX** (much like the reverse Advent box) and collect items during Lent, starting on Ash Wednesday, February 17th, through Easter Sunday, April 4th. See list for all needed items. You will collect items at home in a box, and will bring them into the church, hopefully, on Easter Sunday, if we are able to gather together.



**Feb. 17: Box of Kleenex**

**Feb. 18: 13-Gallon Trash Bags**

**Feb. 19: Bag of Sugar**

**Feb. 19: Bag of Sugar**

**Feb. 20: Peanut Butter**

**Feb. 21: Windex**

**Feb. 22: Scotch Tape**

**Feb. 23: Can Fruit**

**Feb. 24: Jar of pasta sauce**

**Feb. 25: Hand Soap**

**Feb. 26: Quart Ziploc Bags**

**Feb. 27: Bag of Flour**

**Feb. 28: Cream of chicken/mushroom soup**

**March 1: Dry Erase Markers**

**March 2: Sandwich Ziploc Bags**

**March 3: Sharpie Markers**

**March 4: Box of pasta**

**March 5: Paper Plates**

**March 6: 30-Gallon Trash Bags**

**March 7: Bag of rice**

**March 8: Dish Detergent**

**March 9: Can of Soup**

**March 10: Peanut Butter**

**March 11: Span canned meat**

**March 12: Hand Soap**

**March 13: Can of vegetables**

**March 14: Canned chicken**

**March 15: Paper towels**

**March 16: Brillo Pads**

**March 17: Can of Spaghetti O's**

**March 18: Gallon Ziploc bags**

**March 19: Copy paper**

**March 20: Clorox wipes**

**March 21: Container of cooking oil**

**March 22: Paper bowls and/or cups**

**March 23: Toilet Paper**

**March 24: Bag of Corn Meal**

**March 25: Wide packing tape**

**March 26: Vienna Sausages**

**March 27: Can of chili**

**March 28: Lysol Spray**

**March 29: Manwich**

**March 30: Sheet Protectors**

**March 31: Can of fruit or vegetables**

**April 1: Envelopes-No. 10**

**April 2: Box of Pasta**

**April 3: Stamps**

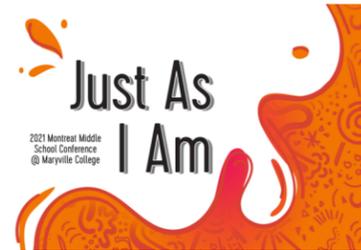
**April 4: Plastic Forks, Spoons, Knives**



# Youth



## MIDDLE SCHOOL MONTREAT



It's time to start thinking about summer trips! Currently plans are in place for the Montreat Middle School Conference to happen in person July 13th - 17th.

The Middle School Conference is designed for youth who have completed fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade by summer 2020. The conference will be held at **Maryville College**, a PC(USA) affiliated private college, located in Maryville, Tennessee. The cost of the conference is \$415.00. If your youth is interested in attending this summer, please get in touch with Farrah Linkous at [youth@erinpresbyterian.org](mailto:youth@erinpresbyterian.org).

### A Note from Montreat

Youth conferees, we are planning to be together in the summer of 2021. The past year has reinforced our belief in the value of being together as the body of Christ! After a year apart, we are eagerly looking forward to welcoming youth to the Montreat valley once again.

We are planning for on-site conferences in the hope that circumstances will be improving by the summer, though we know COVID-19 won't be completely in the rear-view mirror. For instance, given the latest estimates, we anticipate that many adults may have had access to vaccination by June of 2021; youth, however, may not see widespread distribution by that time. We will be following our state's guidelines for mitigation, and we are now working on several scenarios to minimize risk while maintaining what's essential to Montreat Youth Conference. These scenarios include adaptations such as:

- Limiting the capacities of our larger gathering of keynote, worship and recreation.
- Limiting the length of all gatherings.
- Making Small Groups smaller.

- Spending additional time with Back Home groups.
- Adjusting the daily schedule to allow for all of the above.
- Maximizing our use of outdoor space.

Our planning emphasizes worship, keynote, small group, and recreation, just like in every year! We are working to deliver those elements in ways that will meet whatever safety precautions might be in place months from now. Of course, at this point that involves guesswork. We're excited about what might be possible and are hopeful that we can maintain the essential flavor of a Montreat Youth Conference while following safety protocols.



## YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS

We meet on Sundays at 5:00pm via Zoom. Middle School and High School groups will continue to meet together. If you are interested in joining, please contact Farrah Linkous at: [youth@erinpresbyterian](mailto:youth@erinpresbyterian) and she will email the Zoom meeting link to you.

## COLLEGE STUDENT MAIL

Beth Snodgrass sent us some things from when she worked with the students here at Erin. Several of her previous students are being mailed letters they wrote to their future selves and a timeline of their lives. Hope you all enjoy!