

Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (ESV)



Dear Friends,

As we head into the last month of the year and look forward to our Christmas celebrations, I want to thank you for your patience and perseverance through a very critical time. By your constant faithfulness, regular worship, and continued prayers we have endured this crisis and maintained our hope. It hasn't been easy and all of us have changed, but I am grateful for how you continued to support and labor for the work Jesus has given us to do. I fully believe that God will bless you for remaining faithful when so many other things could have hindered your witness or even led you elsewhere.

During this season of Advent, we hold on to the hope that Christ is in our world to redeem humanity

and lead us toward a better life. The traditional scriptures that we read in our Sunday worship services encourage us to believe that God's great plan for salvation of the entire world was fulfilled in the life, work, and ministry of Jesus. It's remarkable to think that God faithfully worked throughout human history and across the centuries until it was time for His Son to be born among us. That miraculous act of Christ's incarnation restored hope to humanity, and we have been blessed by God's continuous commitment to all that Jesus accomplished. God's perseverance will never let us down; it's that same perseverance that you have displayed to uphold, encourage, and maintain our congregation.

I hope that you will read this special bulletin from cover to cover. There are some great reports, as well as a number of opportunities to serve and worship God throughout December. I also hope that you and your families all have a blessed season of goodwill and joy, peace and love.

- Pastor John



CHRISTMAS

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICES

During December, we will be worshipping as usual in the sanctuary at 11:00AM. Special events will be taking place in the church each Sunday, so this a great time of year to invite and bring your family and friends to church.

ON DECEMBER 4TH, we will celebrate Communion during worship and will be returning to our normal routine of passing the bread and juice across the church pews. We will also be installing our new elders for the Class of 2024.

ON DECEMBER 11TH, the Word Players will be presenting their Christmas play "Nativity on The Square," during the worship service. We will begin with hymns and prayers and then hand over the rest of the worship hour to the actors. It will be a wonderful performance and a great opportunity to bring family and friends to see the production.

ON DECEMBER 18TH, as well as having worship, Pastor Stuart will be baptizing Evelyn and John's granddaughter Ellie. This will be the first infant baptism we have had at the church since Covid, and Pastor Stuart is looking forward to baptizing his granddaughter. And because it is the Sunday before Christmas, it will be very special for all of us to be reminded of the child who came into the world long ago to save us.

We will also have our special music service for CHRISTMAS EVE AT 6:30PM, DECEMBER 24TH featuring our handbells, choir, and a harpist who will also play before the worship begins. This will also be a wonderful occasion to bring many of our families and friends to the service, which always ends in candlelight and the singing of Silent Night.

Finally, on CHRISTMAS DAY we will have a carol singing service at 11:00AM to which everyone is invited. The children can also bring some of the gifts and toys they received to show the congregation. 😊

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR FELLOWSHIP

COMMITTEE! We hope you will be able to join us for the annual Christmas Potluck Dinner on December 4th at 5pm. Everyone is welcome to join in the dinner, followed by the singing of Christmas carols, led by Joe Jaynes and Nancy Berry. So put on your Christmas duds, bring your favorite dish to share, and help us start off the holidays together! Signups are appreciated, but come on if you did not have time to do so!!

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS are available for purchase in Honor or Memory of a loved one. The price remains the same at \$15.00 each and may be picked up following the Christmas Eve service. The sale of these flowers provides the Fellowship Team with funds to send cards and meals to those in the congregation who are under the weather and need a little cheering up or a feel better meal. Signup sheets are available in the bulletin each Sunday. Thanks for your support.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

We will again collect the Christmas Joy Offering at our Christmas Eve service. This is one of four PCUSA special offerings we participate in each year. The funds from the Christmas Joy offering help develop leaders among college students who are part of communities of color, and provides support for Presbyterian church workers, current and retired, in times of need. Together the churches of the PCUSA gave nearly \$2.5 million to this offering last year. Offering envelopes will be in the pews in December, or you can contribute online either through the DONATE button on the Erin website (under FUND, select PCUSA Special Offerings) or on the PCUSA website <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/christmas-joy/>



SUNDAY SCHOOL & MORE

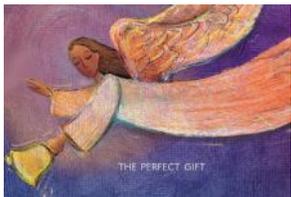
SUNDAY SCHOOL IN DECEMBER



During Advent, we will be combining our Adult classes to study and discuss the lectionary readings from the prophets by sharing our thoughts and ideas about what this season of preparation means. We'll be using the current curriculum that the PCUSA has created and each Sunday we will have a different teacher.

Joe Jaynes kicked off the series on November 27th. Pastor Stuart, Kim Jaynes, and Kellan Sarles will lead the three Sundays in December: 4th, 11th, and 18th.

The classes start at 9:30AM in the Fellowship Hall. Coffee and refreshments are available. Everyone is welcome to join us and if you would like to participate via Zoom, we can make the necessary arrangements.



PRESBYTERIAN GIVING CATALOG

Having a hard time figuring out what to get for that person who doesn't really need anything? Or do you need a last-minute gift? Here's a great suggestion: the Presbyterian Giving Catalog! You can choose a gift in someone's honor that offers help, hope, and relief from suffering to people and communities in need. For example, you could donate a sewing machine to help women develop a stable source of income in a developing part of the world; an emergency food basket for a refugee family; a fishing net that enables small-scale fishers to continue to provide food and income; or chickens that will provide eggs that a family can eat or sell.

There are a few copies of the catalog in the wall rack outside the Outreach room (just before the Noah's Ark room) or you can view and purchase

gifts through the PCUSA website at:

<https://presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org/gifts/>

When you purchase a gift online you can create and download a personalized card to print and mail yourself, or have a card sent by email on a specific date to your gift recipient. This is a great way to honor someone you care about and give a gift that helps the Presbyterian Mission Agency spread God's love and hope across the globe to those who most need it.

FISH PANTRY & OUTREACH

In August, Erin Presbyterian volunteered to serve the FISH Hospitality Pantry in North Knoxville. During a four-hour period, we helped supply many clients with food.

A huge thank you to Marcia/Outreach Team for arranging this opportunity, and to those who came out to help! Our next scheduled volunteer opportunity at the FISH Hospitality Pantry is on **Saturday, January 29th from 9:00-1:00pm**. Please save the date, sign-ups will come in January.

FISH Hospitality Pantries provide groceries to over 7,000 families in the Knoxville area each month. Fish also distributes about 6,000 kids' BOOST Food Bags, created to address the nutritional needs of children. Their slogan is "Feeding Families, Creating Community" which captures their mission and volunteer spirit.

More than 62,000 people live below the poverty line. Read more about the history and mission of FISH Pantries on their website: <https://fishpantries.org>.



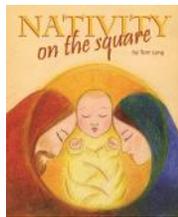
FAMILY MINISTRY & PW



No Planet Worship in December

There will be NO Planet Worship this month. Instead, join us in worship on the second Sunday in December, the 11th, for a special presentation of the WordPlayers Advent show **Nativity on the Square by Tom Long**.

“The figures of a public nativity scene come to life on Christmas Eve and attempt to discover who they are. A bag lady explains the Nativity to them in a manner that is both comic and deeply moving.



Sunday School News

Adult Sunday School classes will combine for the four Sundays in Advent: through December 18th. The combined class will meet in the Fellowship Hall from 9:30 - 10:30 am and will follow the lectionary readings using the Feasting on the Word curriculum.

Also, there will be NO SUNDAY SCHOOL for all ages on December 25 nor on January 1. Regular classes will resume on Sunday, January 8th.



CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO!



Pioneer Club December 7th 6:30 - 7:30 pm Family Life Center

Feliz Navidad! This month in Pioneer Club, we will visit Mexico and experience how Christmas is celebrated south of the border. We will learn about the legend of the poinsettia, join in Las Posadas, and sample some traditional Mexican treats.

PW Fall Bible Study Group

Eleven ladies participated in our Fall Bible Study “**Taste and See**” by Margaret Feinberg. For six weeks, we learned about the significance of food in the Bible and the importance of table time. Also, our wee group collected \$135 for the PW Thank Offering. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the offering.



DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

DECEMBER 4TH	DECEMBER 11TH	DECEMBER 18TH	CHRISTMAS EVE	CHRISTMAS DAY
BELL RINGER	BELL RINGER	BELL RINGER	BELL RINGER	Christmas Morning Service at 11am ★ We'll sing hymns and enjoy the birth of our Savior together
Ripley Linkous	Will McCallum	Lucy Cate	Addison Strand	
BELL RINGER	GREETER	GREETER	GREETER	
Kelli and Tony Denny	Dave Leckie Sara Leckie	Elaina Wood Anna McKay	Diana Brandon Brooks Eggers	
GUIDE	GUIDE	GUIDE	GUIDES	
Craig Strand	Sonja DuBois	Rickey McCallum	Chosen by Pastor	
READER	READER	READER	READERS	
Betty Gibbs	Diana Brandon	Erin McCallum	Chosen by Pastor	
USHERS	USHERS	USHERS	USHERS	
Pat Wallin Dave Leckie	Jim Montgomery Joanne Clelland	Rob Levering Kelcey Levering	Don and Linda Quinley	
COUNTERS	COUNTERS	COUNTERS	COUNTERS	
Andy Sarles Joe Jaynes	Neill Murphy David Eggers	Rickey McCallum Andy Sarles	Craig Strand David Eggers	
NURSERY	NURSERY	NURSERY	NURSERY	
Lizzy Freter Elaina Wood	Jenny Rogers Brooks Eggers	Kay Pennington Kelcey Levering	Volunteers Needed	
FLOWERS	FLOWERS	FLOWERS	POINSETTIAS	
Eggers		Anna McKay	already purchased	

ONLINE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

DECEMBER 4TH	DECEMBER 11TH	DECEMBER 18TH	DECEMBER 25TH
Andy & Kelcey	David & Sara	Cathy and Kelly	Presbytery provides online service

DECEMBER EVENTS

1st 7pm Worship Team Meeting
 4th 12pm Outreach and Creative Expressions
 5pm Christmas Potluck
 5th 7pm BridgeBuilders
 6th 7pm Discipleship Meeting
 9th 12pm Staff Meeting
 11th 11am WordPlayers perform Nativity Play
 In the Worship Service/ 6pm Christmas Caroling

15th 7pm Session Meeting
 24th 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service
 25th 11am Christmas Morning Service
 26th OFFICE CLOSED
 *Please note that there will be
 NO WORSHIP SERVICE on New Year's
 Sunday, and the office is closed on
 Monday, January 2nd.

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FELLOWSHIP TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

While Fellowship got off to a slow start due to Covid restrictions, we still had a busy year. Our first real event was the Brandon Breakfast on Easter Sunday. While we scaled this event down from previous years, we were able to safely serve breakfast to about 75 members and guests. In May we had a Baby Shower for Lauren Lindback and a Bridal Shower for Michelle Waters.

July the 4th was celebrated with our annual Red, White and Blue Potluck luncheon after church the Sunday before, and was enjoyed by all who attended. We followed this up with an Ice Cream Social and Hymn Sing in September. About 26 members joined us and enjoyed it so much they said "Let's do this again"!

Many meals have been provided for church members during this time. Transportation to medical appointments, for those who needed it, were also provided.

A decision was made to wait until the first of next year to restart BreadBreakers, hoping Covid numbers will be down enough to start that event up again.

The Fellowship Committee is here to serve the congregation, but we want to do it safely.

We pray for a healthy and busy New Year!!

Betty Gibbs, Convener

OUTREACH TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

Through the Outreach budget, Erin contributes to groups who support and grow Christ's church and share God's love with people both here in our community and around the world.

Erin participates in the four annual PC(USA)

offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing in April, the Pentecost Offering in June, the Peace and Global Witness Offering in October, and the Christmas Joy Offering in December. We're happy to report that even when we could not meet in person for worship during the pandemic, Erin's members contributed just as much!

Highlights of our Outreach efforts for 2022

January: Gathered towels, washcloths, and blankets for the homeless clients of Volunteer Ministry Center in downtown Knoxville.

February: FISH Hospitality Pantry

We serve on Saturday mornings, once a quarter. Fourteen Erin members gave up their Saturday morning on February 26 to help more than 200 Clients.

March–April: We created a list of *Forty Things to Do During Lent*. Each item included an inspiring quote and a concrete action, many highlighting the missions Erin supports. Erin's congregation also collected diapers and baby wipes for the Syrian refugee family sponsored by Powell Presbyterian.

May: A fund in memory of a long-time Erin member helped pay tuition for Pastor Mamisoa Rakatomalala of Madagascar, as she pursued a graduate degree at Columbia Theological Seminary in GA.

Also, a dozen Erin members and friends served 211 guests at FISH Hospitality Pantry on Saturday, May 28.

June: We sent \$500 from the Outreach budget to Central Bearden Baptist Church to help with meals and snacks for volunteers working at the Remote Area Medical Clinic they held June 24–26.

Part of the Pentecost Offering stays in our community to support work with troubled youth. For the second year, we sent our portion to Safe Haven Empowerment House, which helps neighborhood youth at risk of being drawn into gangs and violence.

July: Five Erin youth and two adults spent part of a week at Sunset Gap Community Center to pack food boxes, filled backpacks with school supplies, and helped with cleaning and construction projects. Outreach contributed \$500 from our budget for supplies.

August: We sent the \$450 remaining in our team's 2021-2022 budget to KUB to help residents who have a hard time paying their utility bills. Then, 16 Erin members braved the heat to volunteer at FISH Hospitality Pantry on Saturday morning, August 27.

September: We sent \$1,000 from our budget to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to help people affected by severe floods in rural eastern Kentucky and other crisis areas around the world, including refugees from Ukraine who have fled to other European countries. We encouraged Erin members to send donations of their own as they are able.



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November–December: We decorated a Christmas tree in the narthex with tags bearing a gift request for a child from Sunset Gap. Erin members chose a tag and purchased the designated gift. Together we provided five gifts, a warm coat, a pair of shoes, an outfit, and two toys, for eleven children. Erin’s youth group wrapped the gifts and we delivered them to Sunset Gap in mid-December so they could be distributed to parents through the schools.

For a wee church, we have a big impact! Join the Outreach team after church on the second Sunday of each month if you’d like to help manage our budget and plan activities for the congregation. Most of all, pray for the great needs all around us, and thank God for giving us the resources to do our part in sharing His love.

BRIDGEBUILDERS

Bridgebuilders started 3 years ago under the umbrella of OH&C as an online forum through which members could safely discuss difficult and divisive issues and develop/deepen relationships in the process. Since its inception, BridgeBuilders information has been reported to the Discipleship Committee and published in the church newsletter and other publications. Kellan Sarles has been the lead organizer/facilitator since it began, this year joined by members Yvette Freter and Anna McKay, and former member Suzanne Burnell. These leaders have been a huge asset. Working together, the team developed the spring series, *The Christian Response to Contemporary Issues*, which covered such topics as Anti-Semitism, Gender/Sexuality, and Our Endangered Planet. The fall course, *Finding Courage in Fearful Times*, addresses the weaponizing of fear, and the fear of dystopia, gun violence, and illness/death. We have used Adam Hamilton’s book *Unafraid* as a primary resource.

For the spring course, we had 29 participants enrolled – 24 Erin members and 5 others. This fall, we have 25 enrollees and 4 others. We average 15 participants per session regardless of topic or moderator. Approximately 15 have been with BridgeBuilders since the study began in 2019.

Each BB session features a slide presentation and/or guest presenter with discussion to follow. We begin or end with prayer and regularly rely on scripture. Our expenses remain minimal, this year totaling about \$300 for both fall and spring. I give our in-house presenters, other than myself, a \$25 gift card per course. If we have a guest presenter, the stipend varies. Although we draw from many reputable sources (and initially used material from *The Thoughtful Christian* in our study of racism), our course topics are mutually selected by Anna, Suzanne, Yvette, Pastor John, and myself. Each individual lesson is original, tailored to our participants, and the Zoom platform we use. They are designed to inspire thought and conversation. Since its inception, BridgeBuilders has tackled *Systemic Racism, Divides and Commonalities with the Protestant Church (“Pilgrims Together”), The Poor Among Us, Contemporary Issues (see above), and Finding Courage in Fearful Times*.

Throughout the pandemic, BridgeBuilders continued to meet as a community each Monday evening, working through challenging material, sharing, encouraging, and growing in faith and community. I do not know of a similar course in any other local church. Quite a few of our BB participants have felt called to apply their awareness, knowledge, and passion to the ministry of Justice Knox.

Kellan Sarles

CHOIR ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2022

To say that the past three years have been unusual for Erin, and for the Choir, would be a considerable understatement. Choir activities stopped in February 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and did not restart until September 2021. During that downtime, Choir members, instrumentalists, and many others in the extended Erin family around the country contributed recorded pieces for use in the pre-recorded online services that replaced face-to-face worship. Erin is truly blessed to have such a deep pool of musical talent from which to draw. The Choir resumed rehearsing and singing in Worship in September 2021, and sang regularly

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until the summer break. We returned to Worship after Labor Day of this year, and expect to sing until the next summer break. The Choir sings, on average, 3 Sundays each month, leaving 1-2 Sundays for other groups like the hand bell ensemble, soloists, small vocal groups, and instrumentalists.

In addition to performing as a vocal group, the Choir takes time each week to strengthen the bonds of fellowship and support that unite us. Each rehearsal provides a time for sharing joys and concerns, and for offering them up to God together in prayer. The Choir has experienced God's answer to prayer on many occasions.

I thank God for providing the resources and gifts that we need to fulfill the ministries to which He calls us. I am constantly encouraged and lifted up by the devotion of each Choir member as we minister together. The Erin congregation offers continual encouragement and support to the music ministry, and I know that everyone involved appreciates that support very much.

Membership in the Choir is open to everyone, high-school age and older. A basic ability to read music is helpful, but not required. The group rehearses Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30 pm, in the Choir room.

Thanks as always to our Organist, Nancy Berry, whose talent and devotion are great blessings for Erin. It is such a joy to work together with her in Erin's ministry of music.

Joe Jaynes, Choir Director

Choir Members 2022

Stacie Armsworth	John House
Kathryn Bornhoeft	Kim Jaynes
Joy Bornhoeft	Mike Jones
Diana Brandon	Suzanne Levering
Tony Denny	Susan Miller
David Eggers	Amanda Murphy
Nehemiah Franklin	Neill Murphy
Cynthia House	Don Quinley
	Kellan Sarles

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS MINISTRY TEAM

This was the 25th and 26th years of the Creative Expressions Ministry at Erin Presbyterian. We decided

to follow the protocol for the two Covid years and keep only two groups active, Sonshine Company Children's Musical Theatre Workshop and Journey 7 Advanced Acting Workshop (J7). However, rather than online workshops for Sonshine Company and masked, socially distant in-person workshops for J7, Sonshine would return to in-person workshops and J7 would return to interactive in-person workshops. We were proud that during the two years of Covid isolation, we had been able to continue these two groups and meet real needs for continuity and support being experienced by Erin's and our community children and especially the youth.

Because Sonshine had not met in-person for two years, we weren't sure what kind of participation we would have, so the Sonshine staff, Cynthia House, Kelly Boyd, Rachel Little, Kenleigh Pennington and Cathy Van Ostrand, chose a shorter, prepackaged show, Grunch!, to get us back into the routine of in-person workshops and a stage show production. We had 11 children, 5 teens and 1 adult, Rev. Stuart, who were part of the workshops and/or the stage production. The parents of our members and some of Erin's former Sonshine parents stepped up to help us with the production, which ran 3 nights with good attendance at each. Though shorter, this production marked one of our best vocal groups ever.

J7, having continued in-person workshops during the pandemic and having maintained participation levels of 15 to 20 teens, did not have as difficult a task as did Sonshine to return to interactive participation. This group, led by Matt Lycus, a degreed, experienced and competent theatre coach, continued with a strong level of participation, averaging 18-20 a week. Several in this group auditioned for and captured parts in theatre productions at their schools and around the area, speaking well for the level of instruction being received.

It is our hope to reignite some of our inactive groups in the coming years when interest and leadership are present.

Submitted by Cynthia House



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Discipleship Report

Sunday School is the keystone of the Discipleship Ministry and several classes were offered across all age groups – two adult classes, a combined Middle and High School Youth class, and a Multi-age (K-5) Children’s class. Classes were mostly held in person but switched to on-line only whenever Covid numbers increased to high levels. Youth and Children’s classes took a break over the summer, but Adult Sunday School continued with a special 5-part series on “Our Favorite Hymns”. Rally Day, the kickoff to a new year of classes, was held in August with the theme “Ancient Words – Ever True.”

Foundational youth and children’s programs resumed in person after a year-long hiatus due to Covid: A combined Middle and High School Youth Group met regularly after worship throughout the school year. Youth also took a summer mission trip to Sunset Gap in July. Five youth stayed at Sunset Gap for 3 days assisting with the food pantry, Back to School Backpack project, and helping with general cleaning and repairs on campus.

In the Spring, 8 of our youth participated in the first Confirmation Class in three years. Confirmands were confirmed in worship on Palm Sunday and participated in the service by writing and reading the prayers and litanies themselves.

Pioneer Club, an activity club for kids K-5, was held monthly throughout the school year. Also, a traditional, weeklong, Vacation Bible School was held in July with the theme “Destination Dig.” Eight children and 3 middle school helpers attended. Planet Worship, our children’s worship program for kids 4 years – 4th grade, returned in the Fall semester on a monthly basis.

New and familiar adult Bible study groups also continued in 2022: Bridgebuilders, our on-line Bible study group, met for a nine-week series in both the Spring and Fall Semesters. The Spring course focused on “Applying a Micah Lens to Contemporary

Issues” while the Fall series explored “Finding Courage in Fearful Times.”

Erin’s Presbyterian Women met in the Spring for a five-week Lenten study: an in-depth look at the text of several familiar and beloved Lenten hymns. PW met again in the Fall for a six-week Bible study by Margaret Feinberg: “Taste and See” – a study of the significance and symbolism of food in the Bible.

Pastor Stuart continued to send out a weekly Mid-Week Bible Study via email and Facebook. These short, personal, study guides lead participants through scripture one chapter at a time. This year’s lessons included the Gospel of Mark, Ecclesiastes, and Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian Church.

Submitted by Joy Bornhoeft

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



7 Reed Sarles

14 Lynne Jones

17 Jenny Boyd

18 Eliza Barber

19 David Eggers

20 April Cyr

21 Farrah Linkous

22 Cathy Van Ostrand

27 Paula Gunter

30 Sarah McKay

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Visit us at: www.erinpres.org for events,
news, and to read John's devotions!

TO:

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