The Beacon

April 2026

Hey folks!

This year, April begins in the middle of Holy Week. It's our first time through these stories together, but in a parallel to the way the calendar fell this year, we are also in the middle of one another's stories.

This congregation turns 150 years old next year. In that time, the average pastoral tenure is about 12 years. Each of those pastors shaped the life of this congregation in innumerable ways during their respective periods of leadership. We are also in our third location. I'll celebrate the 12th anniversary of my ordination in August, and this is the third congregation I have served as pastor. Each of my previous congregations has shaped my ministry as well. Yet neither this pastor nor this congregation are at the end of their story, God is now working through each of us to shape the other.

I'm grateful for that. I am comforted to know that God's not done with me yet. I still have much to learn about the mysteries of faith, and I still have habits that I will either develop or leave behind. God will continue to mold me as both a follower of Jesus Christ and as a Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and I'm so grateful that God is using this church to do that.

This congregation is not the same as it was five years ago, and odds are we will continue to grow and change together over the years to come. We will find new expressions of faith and create new ways to nurture those expressions as the Spirit gives us ability. We will preserve our identity and traditions as we adapt them to new situations. I am so grateful that God calls me to walk through this part of our story with y'all.

I am grateful that I am here for the middle of y'all's story, and that you are here for the middle of mine.

The disciples of the Gospels didn't know they were in the middle of the story. Once they got to Jerusalem, they assumed it was close to the end. When Jesus was crucified, they were sure the story had ended, and all but a few of them fled in terror. The resurrection, however, showed that we are never at the end of our story until God makes all things new.

This month begins in the middle of Holy Week, and just as Easter extends beyond the tomb, so too our stories extend beyond what we can see. We are only now spelling out this chapter, but God has already written the ending: abundant life and steadfast love.

Your brother in Christ,
Rev. Joseph W. Taber IV
Pastor, Erin Presbyterian Church

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

April 3rd Good Friday Service 6:30pm

EASTER MORNING

Easter Breakfast 9:30am

Easter Celebration Service 11am

BRANDON BREAKFAST

Join us for the annual Brandon Breakfast at 9:30am on Easter morning! Our traditional breakfast began 79 years ago when the Brandon Family prepared a hearty breakfast in celebration of our Risen Savior.

Now, Diana Brandon and the Fellowship Team come together to share this special breakfast with their Erin Family. So please join us for food, fun and worship! Signups for the Brandon Breakfast are in the bulletin, or you can call the office at 865-588-5350 and let April know that you plan to attend.

EASTER LILIES

Easter Lilies provide a beautiful way to remember or honor someone special in our lives. You take home your lily after the service on Easter morning. The price of the lilies is $20 this year. Fill out the insert in the Sunday bulletin and make your check out to "Erin Church". In the notes section, please be sure to add "Easter Lily".

FROM KELLAN SARLES

Dear Erin family,
Over the past month, our family has been encircled with so much love from our brothers and sisters at Erin. We have received food, flowers, cards, offers of help, and deeply consoling words of comfort. So many of you were able to attend Randy's memorial service, an observance made all the more meaningful by Erin's talented musicians and choir. Pastor Joseph, your homily was a fitting tribute to a man who was steady and faithful in all he did but rarely put himself forward. Fellowship team, you provided such a lovely reception that allowed us to visit with friends and family.

Not long before he passed, Randy said he counted Erin among his richest blessings because when we moved to Knoxville, they "took us in." Some of you he admired, some he respected, some he enjoyed teasing (Pat, you know who you are). It is said that Christianity is best lived out in community. You have demonstrated that. While it will take time to heal from this loss, we know that you will hold our hands until we get there.

- Kellan, Ben, Andy, Kelsey, Reed and Ali Sarles

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN SPRING GATHERING

Saturday, April 18th 9:30am-2pm
Registration Deadline is April 10
Second Presbyterian Church
700 Pine St., Chattanooga, TN 37402

Mission Focus: Newton Child Development Center, Chattanooga
Worship led by Rev. Wendy Neff
Cost of attending is $12 to pay for lunch
Learn more here:
https://www.presbyteryeasttn.org/presbyterian-women-in-the-presbytery/

OUTREACH FOCUS:
Serenity Ministries

Erin Presbyterian has included Serenity Ministries in its Outreach budget for many years. Part of Knox Area Rescue Ministries (KARM), they began 38 years ago as a domestic violence shelter.

Today Serenity offers an 18-month residential recovery program that serves up to 32 women and their children. Through classes and counseling, women uncover the root causes of their problems in a loving, Christian environment; enjoy a restored life free from addiction, domestic violence, and homelessness; and are empowered to succeed for the rest of their lives. Lori's story is just one example:

Lori looked for love in abusive relationships that led to drug and alcohol addiction. Eventually she lost everything. "I had nothing. No place to live. No clothes, no money. My vehicle was impounded. The police even took my dog to a pound," she says. "I needed somewhere to stay. I didn't know what to do – but I did know about KARM."

At rock bottom, Lori came to Serenity for a second chance and found a nonjudgmental home where she could heal. Through counseling and classes she discovered a love for helping others. Now, Lori wants to work with other women her age to show them it's not too late to change their lives. "Before I came to KARM I was hopeless," she says. "I thought I was too old to make my life worth anything. Now I have a new life. I have things to offer other people. I have hope."

Beginning the Sunday after Easter and ending on May 17, we will collect shampoo and conditioner, body wash, deodorant, tampons and pads, laundry detergent pods, dryer sheets, and dishwashing liquid to help support this worthwhile program. You can place items in the decorated box in the narthex.

You can also support KARM when you donate clothing, toys and baby items, housewares and linens, and furniture. Just drop off gently used items at a KARM Store using the drive-up lane. When the KARM employee asks for your name, request Erin Presbyterian as the beneficiary of your donations; you can still take advantage of the tax deduction.

KARM then returns a portion of the value of these items to Erin via KARM Store gift cards. In 2024 we received over $700 in KARM gift cards that were given to people who come to the church office seeking help.

NEHEMIAH ACTION ASSEMBLY

April 13th at the Civic Auditorium 7pm
500 Howard Baker Jr. Ave.
RSVP for childcare to marjorie@justiceknox.org

It's the largest public meeting in Knox County. When we tell our elected officials that our neighbors matter, and ask them to support a particular action, policy, or change, they take notice!

Justice Knox Wins

- Crisis Intervention training for all city and county patrol officers.
- Annual evaluation of the local mental health system funded by the county.
- City Affordable Housing Fund established with $5 million annually for 10 years.
- 2000 plus affordable homes built or in development
- City and county support of plan to reduce homelessness, including a goal of "functional zero" for veteran homelessness.
- Commitment to develop a tiny home community to house 20 veterans who have experienced homelessness. Completion of Operation Hero's Hill expected in Spring 2026.
- Commitment from KCS Superintendent to meet quarterly with Justice Knox leaders during life of IIRP contract.
- Analysis of our local gun violence problem facilitated by national experts.
- Justice Knox met for development and implementation of an evidence-informed violence reduction strategy, alongside city officials and law enforcement.
- In the first year of implementation Knoxville saw a 35% decrease in fatal shootings.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) - disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration & migration and refugees - serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope. This Offering helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations.

We collect the offering on Easter Sunday.

THE LYDIA CIRCLE

Introducing the Lydia Circle – Our New Saturday Presbyterian Women Gathering
We are pleased to share that the new Saturday Presbyterian Women Circle at Erin Presbyterian Church will be known as the Lydia Circle. This new Circle will be hosted by Kelli Canan-Denny and Jennifer Gahan.
As this new circle takes shape, the name reflects both the spirit of Erin's ministry and the mission of Presbyterian Women: fostering welcome, nurturing faith in everyday life, and creating space for connection, prayer, and spiritual growth.

Who was Lydia?
Lydia appears in the Book of Acts as a successful businesswoman and a faithful disciple. She is remembered for her open heart and generous hospitality, welcoming Paul and other believers into her home and helping establish one of the early Christian communities. Lydia's story reminds us of the power of creating space for faith, fellowship, and encouragement in the midst of daily life.

Scripture Inspiration:
"The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you consider me faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.'" Acts 16:14–15

The Lydia Circle will meet once monthly during Men's Breakfast (Second Saturday, 9:15 am – 10:30am), following the September–May school calendar. We will begin with introductory gatherings in April and May 2026, pause for the summer, and then officially resume in September 2026.

This Circle is intended to provide additional opportunity for women whose schedules make weekday attendance difficult. We will follow the nationally adopted Presbyterian Women Horizons Bible Study.

To learn more about Presbyterian Women and the Horizons study, visit this link:
https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/
If childcare is needed in order to participate, please reach out, we would be happy to help explore options.
We look forward to seeing how God will use this new Circle to build connection, encouragement, and faith within our church community.

Schedule:
9:15 – 9:25 | Fellowship & Welcome (10 min)
·Coffee, quick connection time
·Helps build community without taking too much time

9:25 – 9:35 | Opening (10 min)
·Prayer or brief devotion
·PW announcements / church updates
·Least Coin reminder if applicable

9:35 – 10:20 | Horizons Bible Study (45 min)
·Main discussion time
·Plenty of time for meaningful conversation

10:20 – 10:30 | Closing (10 min)
·Prayer requests
·Closing prayer
·Fellowship as people depart

THE WORDPLAYERS PRESENT: "Singing Through The Rain"

Join us for an evening of community and hope: A reminder to always "sing through the rain".

Saturday, April 11th, 202
6:30pm Refreshments 7pm Show
at the Sherrill Hills Retirement Resort
271 Moss Grove Blvd, Knoxville 37922

Tickets available at www.wordplayers.org
$30 General seating
$35 VIP seating

Sponsored by: Cruze Farms, Magpies Bakery, Tomato Head, The Pink Cactus, Fly Dance Fitness, Knoxville Periodontics

WORDPLAYERS RUMMAGE SALE

The WordPlayers will have a rummage sale on Saturday, May 9th at Erin. All proceeds from the sale will benefit The WordPlayers and their upcoming productions.

If you would like to donate items to be sold, please mark them "For WP" and leave them in the first room on the left in the education wing.

If you have any questions, please call Jeni at 865-531-2490 or email her at this link: wordplayers@comcast.net.

PUB THEOLOGY GROUP – ALL AGES!

We originally began the Pub Theology Group at Abridged for our younger crowd, but the conversations are even better when they're multigenerational!

PLEASE FEEL MOST WELCOME to join us the fourth Tuesday of each month from 6-7pm.

The next one is Tuesday, April 28th, and we hope to see you there!

If you'd like more info, email Nathan Barber at nathan.barber213@gmail.com.

THANK YOU FROM THE PROPERTY TEAM

Thank you to all who helped out at the spring building and grounds work day on Saturday, March 21! A dozen members weeded, raked, trimmed, pruned, and swept outside and dusted and polished the sanctuary pews to get ready for Easter.

Also, check out the new landscaping on the Lockett Rd. side of the building in the open area between the Family Life Center and the Sanctuary. We contracted with a local nursery to plant two flowering crabapple trees, two hollies, and three viburnum shrubs, replacing the old oak trees that had to be cut down last year.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW
FROM THE FELLOWSHIP TEAM

ICE & COFFEE

We no longer have an icemaker in the kitchen, so if you are planning an event at the church that requires ice, you will need to bring a bag with you.

We also have a new coffeemaker in the Fellowship Hall. It's pretty straight forward, but the instruction booklet is in front of it and the filters are in the drawer beneath it.

HOMEBOUND MEMBERS NEED CONNECTION

Did you know that we have some delightful members of our Erin church family who are not able to make to worship services anymore, but would really love to stay connected with our church family?

If you have an extra hour and a friendly smile, please consider visiting a homebound member to brighten their day…believe me, it will brighten yours as well.

Please contact the church office or check the back of the bulletin on Sundays for their addresses. It means so much to them.

KITCHEN USE AT THE CHURCH

If you plan to use the kitchen, please let the office know, beforehand.
Also, as a courtesy to others, please try to limit your food and paper products to what you are going to use.

Fellowship met to clean out the refrigerator and freezer, which yielded 4 leaf bag size bags of throw away. If you are going to leave something in the refrigerator, please label it, but the best thing to do, is give away the leftovers to the event's attendees.

Thank you for helping to keep the kitchen in good working order.

ERIN YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

The Youth here at Erin are looking forward to finishing out the church year on a strong note!

We'll have Sunday School class every Sunday at 9:30am, where we follow the Feasting on the Word curriculum for youth. After church, we'll continue having youth group from 12-1pm, unless there is a church event.

For the rest of the church year, Erin youth will be focusing on mission opportunities, helping wherever they can with ongoing church mission projects, but also planning mission excursions for the summer.

Stay tuned for our big ideas to help give back to our community!

Wednesday, April 8 & Tuesday, April 28
6:30-7:30 pm
Family Life Center

This month, we will be reading the classic Dr. Seuss books "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish" and "The Lorax" – in celebration of Earth Day! We'll play some silly games, make some crafts, and do a little science experiment. Don't miss out on all the fun!

Planet Worship
April 12 and 26

This month in Planet Worship, we will follow the lectionary scripture readings.

Lessons will be illustrated by a coordinating children's book, and the scripture verses will be read aloud and discussed. Books will be selected using Storypath, a resource of Union Presbyterian Seminary that connects children's literature with our faith story.

Vacation Bible School
July 6 - 9,
9:30 am – Noon
Family Life Center

Join us on a summer safari as we travel deep into the jungle to explore the nature of God! Kids will learn that God is Creator, Provider, Protector, and Savior. VBS is open to kids ages 4 years old to rising 5th Grade. Middle school youth can serve as Junior Assistants!

On-line registration begins in this month at www.erinpresbyterian.org.

Please register by May 20th.

EASTER SCAVENGER HUNT

All children 5th grade and younger are invited to the Easter Scavenger Hunt on Easter Sunday.We will gather in the Parlor at 10:15 am for instructions. Each child will receive a collection bag and list of clues to 6 items on the main floor of the church. Every child who participates will receive a special treat bag!

ROOTED IN LOVE: HONORING A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

Over the past month, Erin's Sonshine Company has been walking through a season of deep loss following the passing of their beloved troupe member, Eliana Jacks.

In loving memory, Cynthia House graciously provided a tree to be planted at Erin - a living tribute where we can pause, reflect, and keep Eliana close in our hearts. It will stand as a reminder of her sweet spirit and the joy she brought to so many.

Please continue to lift these precious students, their Sonshine Company leaders, and Eliana's parents in your prayers as they navigate this time of grief.

In loving memory

APRIL VOLUNTEERS

APRIL 5TH	APRIL 12TH	APRIL 19TH	APRIL 26TH
COFFEE	**COFFEE**	**COFFEE**	**COFFEE**
Pat Wallin	Mary Nelle Cate	Suzanne Lawrence	David Eggers
BELL RINGER	**BELL RINGER**	**BELL RINGER**	**BELL RINGER**
William Taber	Ginger Thompson	Craig Strand	Addison Strand
GREETER	**GREETER**	**GREETER**	**GREETER**
Tony and Kelli Canan-Denny	Pat Wallin Kathy Boyd	Sara Leckie Jim Montgomery	Regina Bishop Brooks Eggers
GUIDE	**GUIDE**	**GUIDE**	**GUIDE**
Craig Strand	Eliza Barber	Kelcey Levering	Henry Fellers
READER	**READER**	**READER**	**READER**
Betty Gibbs	Stacie Armsworth	Robbie Levering	David Eggers
USHERS	**USHERS**	**USHERS**	**USHERS**
Rickey McCallum Robbie and Kelcey Levering	David Leckie Gabby Denny Mike Cate	Linda Quinley Brooks and David Eggers	Kim and Dusty Pennington Gary Pennington
COUNTERS	**COUNTERS**	**COUNTERS**	**COUNTERS**
Craig Strand Rickey McCallum	David Eggers John House	Ann Snograss Neill Murphy	Andy Sarles Joe Jaynes

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

3 Kathryn Bornhoeft
9 Craig Strand
9 Dan Berry
14 Erin McCallum
16 Suzanne Lawrence
18 John House
21 Melinda Massengill
29 Jenny Rogers

APRIL CHURCH CALENDAR

Visit the link below for Events and Ministry meeting dates:

https://www.erinpresbyterian.org/calendar/