

SERMON SERIES  
Of First Importance: Celebrating the Risen Lord  
April 20 through May 25

SHPC Family,

The turn of Lenten repentance and humility into Easter joy is one of the core pivots in the Christian faith. Truly, they are inseparable! It's not as if we wake one day as Christians and discover we have no need for forgiveness, no need for new life.

So, as we turn this month toward Holy Week, may we consider that holy sequence from the pain of the cross to the hope of the empty tomb not as two separate, unrelated instances, but rather the unified work of the Living God in bringing about justice, mercy, and new life all at once.

Throughout Lent, we've been considering the judgment of God, how even the mention of it can make us nervous yet how ultimately, we should hear it as good news, as the declaration that the Lord is deeply concerned for the brokenness of creation and sets about to make things right. The cross of Jesus, I hope we will come to see, is where that verdict is rendered, and not upon us. This verdict doesn't cast us away but rather gathers us to the Lord.

Have you ever considered that? In the death of Christ in the Gospel of John, shortly after Jesus enters the city in his final week, he declares to his disciples, "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:31-32). Here Christ is proclaiming how his very death, his "lifting up" will simultaneously bring judgment upon the world and draw all peoples to himself. What good news this is! Only in the ways of grace can the Lord unite both the setting right of the world and the reconciliation of the world.

As we approach this Holy Week, I would invite you to embrace how the grace of Christ might "set things right" within your own life. What could it mean to be defined by grace, by this unmerited gift? What about you would change?

Perhaps it could mean that we'd be a little more in tune with how mercy and compassion could impact our relationships, our interactions within our community, our country, and throughout the world. Perhaps it could mean that as a church we might become even more committed to bearing witness to a way of grace within our neighborhood.

There's something magnetic about it—and for good reason. It was by grace that Christ draws all people to himself.

In Christ,



Dr. Jay F. Howell  
Pastor | Head of Staff

## April 2025 | at a Glance

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting 10a Pottery	<b>2</b> 9:20a Howell 9:30a Zeanah 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise 5p Gale/Kimmey 6p Dotterweich 6p Living into Lent 7p Chancel Choir	<b>3</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study 10a Pottery	<b>4</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G2)	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream 4-5p SNF in The Loft 5-6p Youth Small Groups 5p SM Continuing Ed. and Supervision	<b>7</b> 9a Yoga 12p Blackwell	<b>8</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting 10a Pottery 6p Session Meeting	<b>9</b> 9:20a Howell 9:30a Zeanah 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise 5p Gale/Kimmey 6p Dotterweich 6p Living into Lent 7p Chancel Choir	<b>10</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study 10a Pottery 12p Church and Community Luncheon	<b>11</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G2)	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> <b>PALM SUNDAY CONFIRMATION SUNDAY CHURCH AND COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream 3p Easter Egg Hunt on the playground 4-5p SNF in The Loft 5-6p Youth Small Groups	<b>14</b> 9a Yoga 12p Blackwell 6p Disciple Study	<b>15</b> 9a FISH Ministry 9:30a Staff Meeting 10a Pottery	<b>16</b> 9:20a Howell 9:30a Zeanah 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise 5p Gale/Kimmey 6p Dotterweich 6p Living into Lent 7p Chancel Choir	<b>17</b> <b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study 10a Pottery 6p Maundy Thursday Dinner, Liturgy, and Communion in Barron Hall	<b>18</b> <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G1) 12p Good Friday Service in the Sanctuary	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> <b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> 6:45a Sunrise Service at the Sunhouse Fountain on Cherokee Blvd. 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Releasing of the Butterflies at Cross in front of the Magnolia Tree 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream No SNF	<b>21</b> Easter Monday Church Office is Closed	<b>22</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting 10a Pottery 6:30p Board of Deacons Meeting	<b>23</b> 9:20a Howell 9:30a Zeanah 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise 5p Gale/Kimmey 5:45p First Communion Class in the sanctuary 6p Dotterweich 7p Chancel Choir	<b>24</b> 8a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study 10a Pottery 5:30p Table Talk at Cazzy's Bearden 6p New Officer Exam and Joint Session and Diaconate Mtg.	<b>25</b> 7a L.I.F.E. Group   Men's Bible Study (G1)	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 8:45a Worship in Barron Hall 9:45a Sunday School 11a Worship in the Sanctuary   Livestream No SNF	<b>28</b> 9a Yoga 12p Blackwell	<b>29</b> 9:30a Staff Meeting 10a Pottery	<b>30</b> 9:20a Howell 9:30a Zeanah 10:30a Dotterweich 4p Knitters/ Crocheters/Stitchers 4:30p KidsPraise 5p Gale/Kimmey 6p Dotterweich 7p Chancel Choir			

## JOIN US FOR PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP ON APRIL 13 AND THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT AT 3P IN THE AFTERNOON

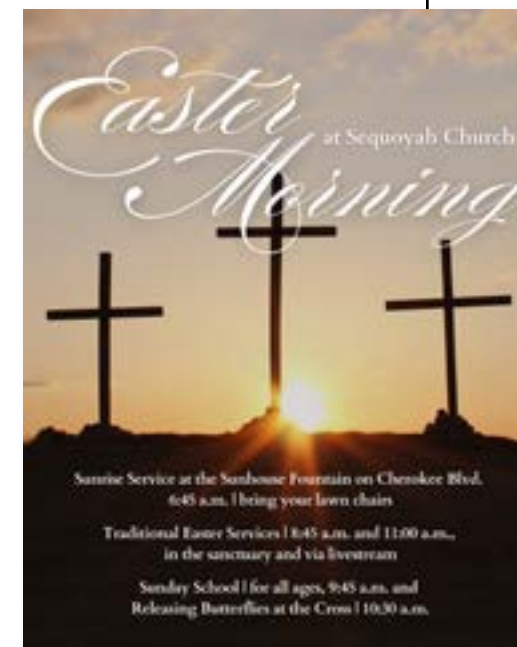
Join us on April 13 at the 8:45 or 11:00 a.m. service. Before 11:00 a.m. worship, children are encouraged to meet Mary Emily in the back of the sanctuary to receive their palms for the processional. Afterwards, they will be seated with their parents. Come see the live donkey outside the church at both services!



**Experience the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 6:00 p.m. in Barron Hall. The evening will include dinner, liturgy, and communion as we commemorate the final meal Jesus shared with the disciples before His crucifixion. Childcare will be provided.** Reservations are not required but are very much appreciated. Sign up for our Maundy Thursday dinner now: <https://forms.gle/KggPjWxD3mUzXtBc9>

**All are invited to the Good Friday Service | The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross on April 18, at noon in the Sanctuary. Childcare is provided.**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

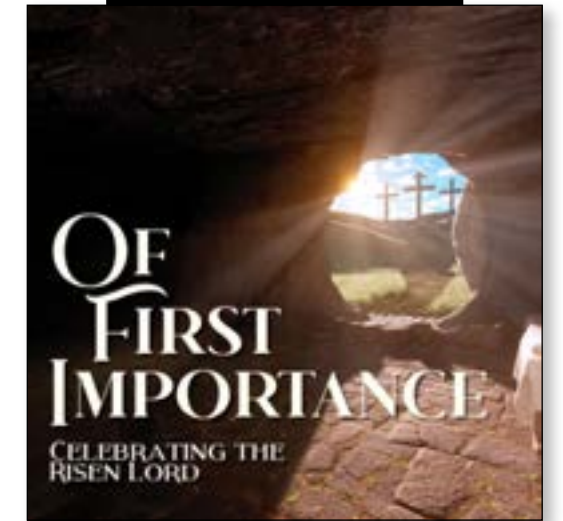


**Easter Sunday, April 20 | Sunrise Service at the Sunhouse Fountain on Cherokee Blvd., 6:45 a.m. | bring your lawn chairs**  
**Traditional Easter Services | 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., in the sanctuary and via livestream**

**Sunday School | for all ages, 9:45 a.m.**  
**Releasing Butterflies at the Cross, 10:30 a.m.**

*"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" -John 11:25-26*

JOIN US  
APRIL 20 THROUGH  
MAY 25 FOR OUR  
SERMON SERIES,  
"OF FIRST IMPORTANCE:  
CELEBRATING THE  
RISEN LORD"



## The Unified Work of God

So, may we consider that holy sequence from the pain of the cross to the hope of the empty tomb not as two separate, unrelated instances, but rather the unified work of the Living God in bringing about justice, mercy, and new life all at once.

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Perhaps it could mean that we'd be a little more in tune with how mercy and compassion could impact our relationships, our interactions within our community, our country, and throughout the world. Perhaps it could mean that as a church we might become even more committed to bearing witness to a way of grace within our neighborhood.

There's something magnetic about it—and for good reason. It was by grace that Christ draws all people to himself. -Pastor Jay



Give me eyes to see that You are the person in front of me who is hungry, gracious Lord. When I fail to see my neighbor as myself, cure my blindness. When I fail to hear Your voice when a friend is speaking from their brokenness, give me ears to hear. When I can't feel empathy for the stranger who is afraid, kindle my heart to comfort. In all things, mold me to be more compassionate as a follower of Your ways. Remind me again that in loving one another, we all find our way to You. Amen

- A Prayer for Compassion | from *Love Heals* by Becca Stevens

### WINTER SPEAKER SERIES WITH BECCA STEVENS



When we cultivate compassion for others, we can feel the loving-kindness God offers to us.

-Becca Stevens

“When you invest in women, entire communities heal.” Thistle Farms’ social enterprise provides female survivors of abuse with free housing, healthcare, counseling, job readiness training, and employment for two years. Together they stand as a living testament that community is the oldest form of healing in the world. We are grateful for our time with Becca Stevens, president and founder of Thistle Farms; Shameeka, Thistle Farms Manufacturing Team; and Lynita, Thistle Farms Case Management and Logistics.

**Spring is finally here! I am thankful for the flowers and warmer weather, and for all of you and the joy that your fellowship brings to SHPC.**

If you are new to SHPC or newly retired, know that you have some great ways to connect or re-connect with past friends and make new ones.

Last month at our Church and Community Luncheon we welcomed Beth Scoonover as she told us about her organization that encourages and promotes reading to many of the underserved children in Knoxville.



**This month on Thursday, April 10, at noon in Barron Hall,** we will welcome former diplomat and Knoxville Mayor Victor Ashe as he tells us about his time as the U.S. Ambassador to Poland. We will enjoy chicken wraps from Chick-fil-A. The cost of lunch is \$15. Please RSVP to the church office at 865-522-9804 by Monday, April 7.

**Then for our Monday Matinee, April 28, at 2:00 p.m.** we will show *The Six Triple Eight* in the Media Room of the Spitzer Education Building. Popcorn and drinks will be provided. Come join us and bring a friend. If you have any questions please call Rev. Janna Preston at 86-522-9804 or email her at <mailto:jp Preston@sequoyahchurch.org>. - Rev. Janna Preston



## REACH One-Year Anniversary Approaching

**Can you believe that it was almost a year ago when we launched the REACH Campaign for updates for our building and a powerful commitment to Olive Tree Early Learning Academy?**

**What a difference a year makes.** You, the church, stepped up in powerful ways, embracing this vision for a facility that fosters connection, fellowship, and accessibility, rather than hinder it and for an impact in the city with a cherished mission partner. In the past twelve months, by the grace of God, we met and exceeded our goals to fund these updates and commitments; we finalized plans for the building; and we began construction.

Now you have only to drive past the church to see a glimpse of the progress. Different areas of the church are already further along than we had hoped, with some chance that the main office area will be completed this summer.

Obstacles have also come up, as one would expect for construction at this scale. We're still figuring out what to do about the big rock underneath where we need to put the elevator linking the sanctuary to three other floor levels, all in the same elevator.

So as we come to the one-year anniversary of this monumental undertaking for the congregation, we will invite every member of the church to consider in faith how God continues calling us forward. In particular, we will discern how our commitments might “Increase,” “Affirm,” or “Be New” for this shared vision.



**Be on the lookout for more details in worship.** Big things happening in the life of SHPC. -Pastor Jay

## TIME TO PRAY

“Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for Him to act.” Psalm 37:7

Our Father in Heaven,

Your love endures forever and we are grateful.

We thank You as we continue this time of Lent, to reflect, to pray, we have wandered and pondered and looked to You for truth.

We are thankful that You call us to be still and wait upon You.

As Holy Week nears, we pray that You will keep us mindful of just what the cross means as we wait on You.

The cross is a painful reminder, so hard to look at, yet You went; for us, You gave everything!

Sorrow overwhelms us, death overwhelms us. But You tell us to wait for You!

From that deepest darkness, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior arose, conquering death, He brings light, hope and life, new and eternal life.

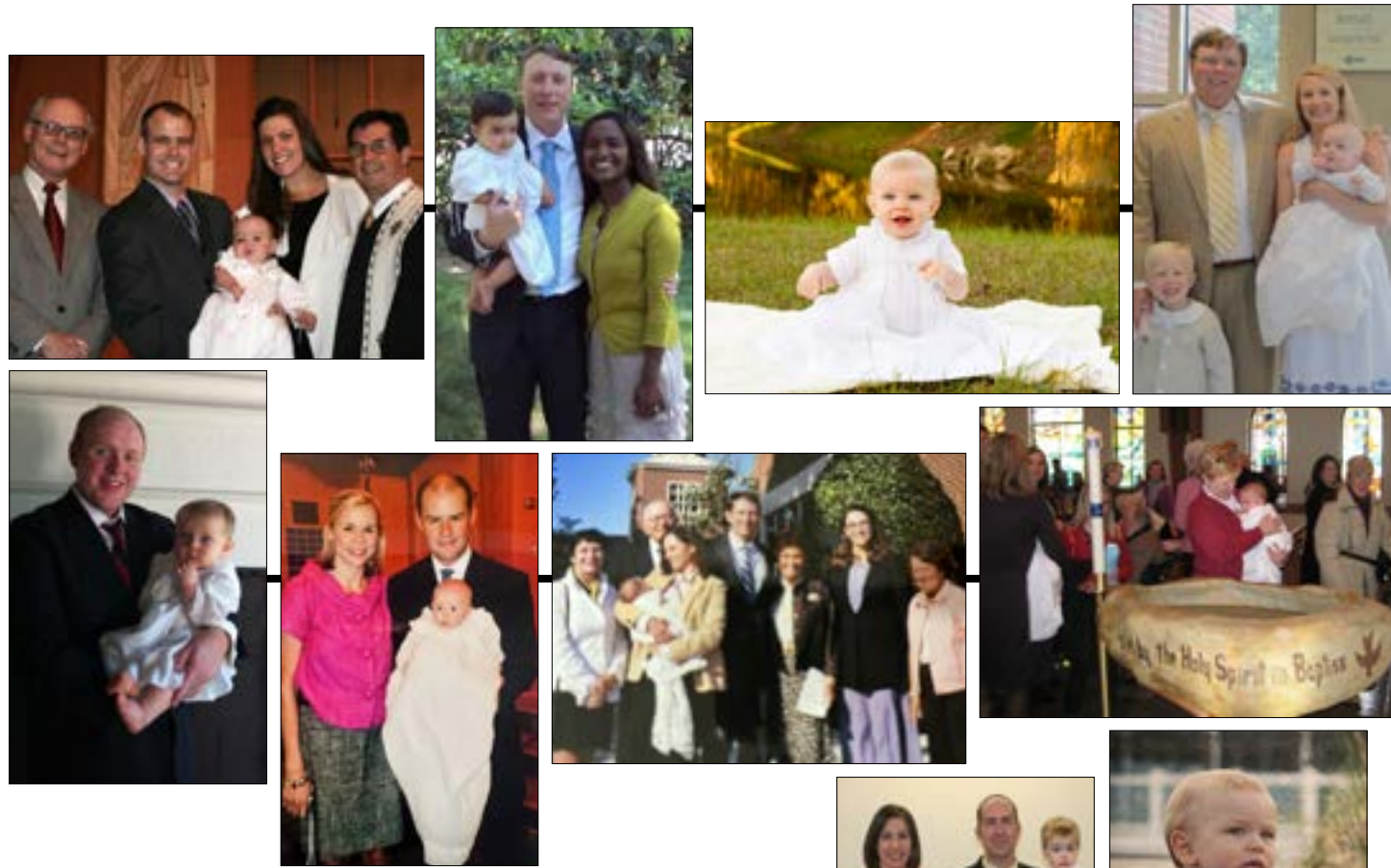
Jesus Christ, our Easter, our Celebration, our Faith, we praise and love You.

In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen -shared by SHPC Prayer Ministries

**Our next Table Talk is on Thursday, April 24, at Cazy's Bearden,** 215 Brookview Center Way #109, 37919 | Join us for a wonderful time of fellowship for women who have lost their spouse. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. for dinner and fellowship at different restaurants in town (Dutch Treat). Questions, call Becky or Janna at 865-522-9804.

**Please note: We will not have a Men's Fellowship Dinner in April. We hope all will join us for "Experience the Upper Room" on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 6:00 p.m. in Barron Hall. The evening will include dinner, liturgy, and communion.** Sign up for our Maundy Thursday dinner now: <https://forms.gle/KgqPjWxD3mUzXtBc9>





**Our 2025 Confirmation Class was examined by Session on March 27, 2025. Confirmation Sunday is Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025.**

Join us in celebrating our newest members of the church! Baby photos of each of our Confirmands are shown above in alphabetical order from left to right: Maleny Becker, Keally Counts, Owen Dale, Bennie Diddle, Quinn Drysdale, Amelia Greer, Laura Harris, Owen Hunter, Abigail King, and Colton Rodgers.



**No bunny wants to miss this! Make plans now to join us for our Annual Church and Community Easter Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday, April 13, at 3:00 p.m. on the playground.** We will have a petting zoo, balloon twisters, cookies and lemonade, egg decorating, face painting, and loads of fun! Children should bring their own baskets for the hunt. **Please note: we will be on the playground due to construction on our front lawn this year.**

**Sign up participants and adult volunteers now for VBS, at sequoyahchurch.org, Join us for the ultimate Alaskan adventure!** As we trek the northern tundra, we'll discover how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. Guiding us towards Jesus, True North VBS reveals that He is a faithful friend we can always trust. He's our True North! Direct sign-up link: <https://forms.gle/JyVLetsCqzJ6kiKz8>



**Our spring 1st Communion Class will be on Wednesday, April 23, at 5:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary.** This class is for all children, second grade and up, who have not yet been welcomed to The Lord's Table. Email Mary Emily Morris at <mailto:memorris@sequoyahchurch.org>, if you plan to attend.



**In the Kingdom, Mary Emily read the book *The Tale of Three Trees* by Angela Elwell Hunt to our elementary children. Afterwards, they made their own watercolor versions of the trough, boat and cross.**

**Holy Week at Sequoyah Church with the Children**

On Palm Sunday, April 13, children can meet me in the back of the sanctuary to receive a palm branch before the 11:00 service for the processional. Afterward, they will be seated with their parents. Come see the live donkey outside the church at both services.

Experience the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 6:00 p.m. in Barron Hall. The evening will include dinner, liturgy, and communion as we commemorate the final meal Jesus shared with his disciples before His crucifixion. Childcare will be provided.

Join us on Good Friday for the Service of The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross on April 18, at noon in the Sanctuary. Childcare will be provided

Then on Easter Sunday, April 20, we will have Easter Services at 6:45 a.m. at the Sunhouse Fountain on the Blvd., 8:45 and 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Join us for Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., and then at 10:30 a.m. we will take the children outside to the cross for the releasing of the butterflies! Looking forward to this special week and celebrating our Risen Lord! Mary Emily Morris, *Director of Children's Ministries*



**Missionary Spotlight**

**Botho and Gisela Heinz | Germany**

Botho is a global worker with Theologischer Schulungs-Service (TSS) since 1990. He began his career in 1977. His ministry with TSS started out in the former Soviet Union and has included ministries in: Poland, Hungary, Austria, Romania and Croatia. Through World Reach he has ministered in Kenya, the U.S. and Canada.

-Barbara Eldridge, International Missionaries Liaison



**SESSION RECAP | 03.11.25**

- 25 total, including Revs. Garris and Howell; Clerk of Session Susan Hyde; Business Administrator Tim Thurston; and Deacon Vice-Moderator Julie Cornell
- Devotion from Mark Benko
- Main Order of the Day was a report from the Diaconate and Care Ministries, followed by dedicated time in prayer for the concerns of the church.
- Other business included reports from David Corden on REACH Construction progress, from Clerk of Session Susan Hyde, and from the Pastors.
- More detailed minutes of Session meetings are available by request.

# SEQUOYAH HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3700 Keowee Avenue | Knoxville, Tennessee 37919  
865.522.9804. | sequoyahchurch.org

## 04.25

**Our Meal Ministry** | SHPC has some great cooks, and our Meal Team is ready to help any member of our congregation at a time of need, such as illness, recovery, loss, or welcoming a new baby into your home. If this ministry could help you or someone you know, please text or email Helen Bruner at (865) 368-4107, <mailto:helen.bruner44@gmail.com>, or Jennifer White at (865) 363-9684, <mailto:jennifer6178@hotmail.com>. If you would like to participate in this ministry and furnish a meal to someone in need, please let us know!

## CHURCH RECORDS

### BAPTISMS

Nora Scott "Scottie" Ayres  
daughter of Joseph and Jenna Ayres, Jr.  
Sunday, March 30, 2025

Maggie June Bowman  
daughter of Matt and Lauren Bowman  
Sunday, March 23, 2025

### DEATHS

Michael Gray  
Sunday, March 9, 2025

John Perry  
Thursday, February 27, 2025



**All are invited to join us for an Easter Morning Sunrise Service across from the Sunhouse Fountain on Cherokee Blvd. Sunday, April 20 at 6:45 a.m. Please bring your lawn chairs.**