

Erin's Family

Carmen grew up in Tulsa, OK where she was active in the FBC, Tulsa music and youth programs. From the time she could talk she was singing and it continues to be a major part of her life. She went to William Jewell College in Liberty, MO where she earned her degree in Church Music. She then moved to Waco to attend Truett Seminary and joined Seventh and James and began singing in the choir. While at Truett, she and Erin met, fell in love and were married June 24, 2000. Her younger brother, Eric, died suddenly from undetected cancer on May 27, 2001. Her parents, Kirk and Debbie Brassfield, moved to Houston in August of 2001 because Kirk's company moved their corporate office from Tulsa to Houston. Carmen and Erin joined them in Houston after graduating from Truett in December of 2001 to actively look for jobs. When Erin started working at South Main Baptist Church and it became clear that Houston was going to be home, Carmen began working for the McNair and Houston Texans Foundations. An avid football fan, Carmen found this was a wonderful job located in the stadium in the midst of the football operations. She worked there until a few weeks before Alexandra Julie was born on November 3, 2004, and Carmen transitioned to working as a stay-home mom. The children were smaller than the football players, but certainly required more energy to work with! Samuel Eric was born November 2, 2006. Carmen is an active singer in the SMBC choir and also sings with a women's ensemble in the church. She has been in 6 of the last 7 Bach to Broadway productions at South Main, including playing the role of Nellie last year in *South Pacific*. She teaches ESL in the South Main International Learning Experience on Tuesdays and has been a member of the Houston Masterworks Chorus for eight years.



Alexandra Julie Conaway (Alex), started kindergarten this year and was in the Vanguard Program in HISD. She is full of life, and opinions, and enjoys doing art projects with her grandmother, playing goalie in soccer, dressing up, singing and doing missions at church, and playing with her little brother.

Samuel Eric Conaway (Sam), started pre-school this year and loves playing with his friends at school. He has an explosive imagination and loves playing with cars, dinosaurs, and anything his big sister will let him do. He enjoys singing at church and at school and is a closet Michael Jackson fan.



Please join
The Pastor Search Committee
in these opportunities
to become better acquainted
with Erin and his family:

Friday, May 6

- 5:30 p.m. *Supper with the staff*
- 7:00 p.m. *Church-wide meeting*
Dessert with youth afterward

Saturday, May 7

- 9:30 a.m. *Adults age 55+*
- 11:00 a.m. *Choir*
- 1:00 p.m. *Deacons*
- 4:30 p.m. *Picnic with families*
and children

Sunday, May 8

- 10:50 a.m. *Erin will help lead in*
worship and preach. The
Called Conference of
Wednesday, May 4th, will
reconvene at the end of
the worship service.



Seventh & James Baptist Church

Recommendation from the Pastor Search Committee

It is with great excitement that
we present to you as our candidate:

Rev. Erin Blake Conaway



Sam, Carmen, Erin, and Alex

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Why Erin Conaway?

The Pastor Search Committee has spent a great deal of time in prayer and study since being commissioned in May, 2010. We unanimously agree that Erin is the right person for Seventh and James at this time. Here are some of the reasons we chose Erin:

- + Liturgical worship style
- + Excellence in pastoral care
- + Creative and insightful sermons
- + Spiritual and emotional maturity
- + Ability to relate to all age groups
- + Remarkable sense of humor
- + Ability to organize and lead
- + Compassion for all humanity
- + Excellent writer
- + Integrity and authenticity
- + Energy and excitement
- + Solid theological training
- + Intellectual depth
- + Servant leadership style
- + Familiarity with CBF, Waco, Baylor, Seventh, and the broader Baptist world
- + And for many more reasons you will need to discover for yourselves.



Reverend Erin Blake Conaway

Erin grew up in Midland, Texas and earned a BA in English from Baylor University in 1997. He continued his education at George W. Truett Theological Seminary and graduated with a Master of Divinity in December, 2001. While attending Truett, he joined and attended Seventh and James. Erin is currently completing a Doctor of Ministry degree in the area of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care from Brite Divinity School, a division of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. His doctoral project will focus on hope and the minister's role as an agent of hope with individuals as well as creating hopeful communities in congregations. He is on schedule to graduate in December of 2012.

Erin currently serves as Associate Pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. His responsibilities include meeting pastoral care needs of the congregation through visitation in hospitals and nursing homes; grief, spiritual, pre-marital and marital counseling; giving oversight and leadership to the extensive mission efforts of the church including local mission efforts as well as international projects and trips; giving oversight and leadership to the outreach efforts of the church; trying to lead and stretch the church in its awareness and practice of spiritual disciplines; supply preaching and teaching. He has served in this position for nine years.

In addition to leading numerous mission trips and projects, Erin helped create a local program called "Manna," a service for homeless neighbors in the South Main area. Each Sunday morning, these neighbors are invited to share coffee, "manna bags" (non-perishable food and basic supplies), prayer requests, and a Scripture meditation with one another. This provides a sacred time of worship and fellowship with brothers and sisters who are often not welcomed any other place in the community. Erin also brings experience in Clinical Pastoral Education and Chaplaincy work at Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center in Waco, Texas where he was supervised by our own Seventh and James member, Ross Davis.

Erin and his wife Carmen were married in June of 2000 and are the proud parents of Alexandra and Samuel. In his free time, Erin loves to grill, watch movies with Carmen, take walks with the kids, fly fish, and snow ski.

From Your Pastor Search Committee Members

I am eager for you to meet Erin and discover the qualities in Erin that quickly captured our hearts, minds, and imaginations as the pastor who can even more tightly bind us as pilgrims on our journey together. I knew I loved him on paper: He had all the right answers but with a freshness we had not seen. In interviews, we found his depth of faith and his love of life contagious. I look forward to hearing him each Sunday as he preaches the word of God as he has come to understand it through his unique life experience. — Ellen Deaver

It has been a joy to get to know Erin and his wife. His own rich spiritual journey, combined with his remarkable integrity and sense of loyalty, his quiet intellect, his intense compassion for others, his quick wit, and his energy and enthusiasm, make him a gifted preacher and pastor with great potential. He is compatible with the values we treasure at Seventh, especially our style of music and worship. We are truly blessed to have crossed paths with him. — Ann Sims

I like Erin's unshakeable integrity, his sense of deep Christian commitment, and his high level of energy, all of which make for wonderful pastoral leadership. In addition to his theology, which is completely in keeping with that of the majority membership of Seventh and James, and his very commendable preaching style, he has more business experience than most pastors his age and has exhibited excellent administrative skills and inter-staff relationships in his past ministerial positions. I find him immensely likeable, and I believe the Seventh and James congregation will find a similar affability in him. — Bill Hillis

As an undergrad English major and creative writer, Erin is a gifted and thoughtful communicator with a command of expression in both sermon and speech which is comfortably serious and comfortably humorous, threading his amazing life story into his theological and personal pilgrimage. He easily demonstrates a genuine love of Christ and the church, and his obvious love of life and people is engaging and infectious to the point that being around him and his lovely wife just make you feel positive and joyful. Erin is intelligent, spontaneous, quick on his feet, resourceful, accessible, credible, and a person I feel everyone would not only enjoy as a pastor but enjoy as a friend. — Daryle Echols

Erin has vibrant energetic, personality that will resonate with the people of Seventh, both young and old. I found his sermons of substance and his "pastoral presence" dignified, but engaging. I am excited to have him help Seventh move forward to a new level of service in this community and the world-at-large. — Bert Wilson

Erin has a dynamic and energetic personality that naturally draws one into his circle. He will relate well with all ages and bring new life and enthusiasm into our congregation. — Jamie Burnett

Erin is engaging and has a good sense of humor. I like his sermons. He has a high value for integrity. He will be able to connect to the broad spectrum of people who come to Seventh and will likely attract young families. — Becky Griffin

I am excited about the promise that Erin has for our congregation. His energy, compassion, maturity and sensitivity are gifts that have defined his ministry. He brings a natural storytelling ability, a sense of humor, and a listening ear to the pulpit. Respect, humility, personal integrity, and naturalness in his integration of faith into life are among the personal characteristics that have impressed me.

— Donna Kennedy

From Others Who Know Erin

I have the highest respect and regard for Erin. He is spiritually and emotionally mature beyond his years, and he is ready to be a Senior Pastor. He would attract a significant student population – not just the followers, but the students who are searching for more depth and meaning.

– Dr. Daniel Vestal, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

I have fond memories of Erin as a wonderful student. He is a pleasant and wonderful person. I would love to have him as my pastor.

– Dr. Hulitt Gloer, Professor of Preaching and Christian Scripture, Truett

Erin is a strong team and consensus-builder. He has great regard for and shepherds great protection of the worth and dignity of all persons. Such people, though few, are quickly followed. Erin has an enormous heart and questioning mind. His integrity is beyond question. He would be an excellent pastor at Seventh.

– Steve Wells, Sr. Pastor, South Main Baptist Church

Erin is absolutely perfect for Seventh and James. He possesses depth, values liturgical style, and has a solid sense of integrity and character.

– Dr. David Garland, Dean, Professor of Christian Scripture, Truett

Erin is an extremely bright, fun-loving and self-assured young man with a wonderful sense of humor who always approaches new challenges with a refreshing 'can do' attitude. He genuinely loves people – all types of people. The depth of his personal insights and wisdom – as well as his spiritual maturity – far exceed his years of experience and, in my opinion, can only result from significant study, prayer, and personal reflection. He is sought out by our staff and laity for his opinions and counsel, and it is my observation that his advice is always delivered in lovingly measured doses – offered not to impress or overwhelm but simply to encourage others in finding their own truth. Erin's preaching style is 'understated elegance.' His sermons are well-crafted, with carefully chosen words filled with humor, irony, and wonderfully personal stories – always thought-provoking and delivered in an 'easy to listen to,' sincere, and humble style. Cherish him - he is very special.

— John McCoy, Deacon at South Main Baptist Church
Retired Chief Administrative Officer, Pogo Producing

Erin has a deep and sincere spirituality and isn't afraid to wrestle with difficult questions.

– Matt Sciba, Community Life Pastor, Victoria, Texas
Supervised Erin as Director of Recruiting at Truett Seminary

Pastorally, there is nobody better than Erin. He is a brilliant writer, a phenomenal preacher, and an amazing guy. You will be very fortunate to have him.

– Josh Haynes, Chief of Staff for Congressperson Jo Ann Emerson