



Reaching Out

newsletter of east liberty presbyterian church

December 2008

Christmas Pageant

Sun., Dec. 14, at 10 am, in the Social Hall



This year's pageant is entitled: "Double Take! A Christmas Pageant as told by Matthew and Luke." As we celebrate the glorious story of the birth of Jesus, we think of angelic appearances, the journey to Bethlehem, and Jesus' birth in the manger. But we also call to mind shepherds tending sheep in the fields by night, wise people who followed the star to the manger, and other supporting characters like Elizabeth, Zechariah and the infamous King Herod. What we don't always remember is that these

details and characters are featured in different Gospel stories! This year we'll tell the story of the birth of Christ with humor, mystery and awe, while reminding us of how the story is told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

There will be a rehearsal for children on **Sat., Dec. 13**, from 9:30-11:00 am. Light refreshments will be served after rehearsal in rooms 224 and 227.

Note: All Church School Classes are canceled on **Sun., Dec. 14**. Children should arrive at ELPC by 9:30 am, to get ready for their performance.

What's Happening in December

Join us, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

- **Noon-Hour Organ Recital Series**, page 6
– Wednesdays, Dec. 3, 10, and 17
- **Christmas Concert & Carol Sing**, page 3
– Sat., Dec 20, at 4 pm
- **Special Service for Dealing with Grief During the Holidays**, page 8
– Sun., Dec. 21, at 4 pm
- **Christmas Eve Worship Services**, check the Sunday bulletin for details
 - **Family Service**, at 5 pm, in the Sanctuary
Note: Please bring a non-perishable food item for the EECM food pantry or a travel-size toiletry item for the Men's Shelter.
 - **Taizé Worship**, at 7 pm, in the Chapel
 - **Candlelight Communion Service**, at 11 pm, in the Sanctuary
 - Special Music begins at 10:45 pm
- **New Years Eve Worship**, page 8
– Wed., Dec 31, 7 pm

Sunday Morning Services

* Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Good Samaritan Worship • 8 am

December Liturgist: Clark Smith

- Dec. 7* The Rev. David Carver,
Crafton Heights First United
Presbyterian
- Dec. 14 Brian Diebold, *ELPC Youth and
Young Adult Ministry Intern*
- Dec. 21 Lydia's Place
- Dec. 28 To Be Announced

Journey Worship • 8:45 am

- Dec. 7* The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
- Dec. 14 The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
- Dec. 21 The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
- Dec. 28 The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sanctuary Worship • 11 am

- Dec. 7* The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
- Dec. 14 The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
- Dec. 21 The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
- Dec. 28 The Rev. Miriam Chamberlain

Koinonia Service of Praise

Second Sunday of each month • 7 pm

- Dec. 14 The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Labyrinth Prayer Walk

Mondays • 10 am-3 pm

Wednesdays • 10 am-9 pm

Taizé Prayer Service

Wednesdays • 7 pm

The Rev. Christiane Dutton

"At my first Christmas Eve at ELPC, I remember being surprised seeing Cynthia Jackson leading the worship service. Coming from a Catholic tradition, it took us a while to realize she was a pastor...and that it was OK! Wonder and awe surprised us that night." – Caterina Rosano



Catch up with ELPC's 2008-09 Confirmation Class on page 5!

Top Row, L to R: Talora Martin, Erich Harkema, Josh Lawrence, Ben Engelhardt, Sophie Klancher
Bottom Row, L to R: Camden Copeland, Madie Massey, Camara Copeland

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

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Office Hours

Monday–Friday, 9 am–5 pm

Sunday, 9 am–12:30 pm

Staff Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

Pastor

The Rev. Heather Tunney Schoenewolf
Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries

Linda Addlespurger
Director of Hope Academy

The Rev. Miriam Chamberlain
Visitation Pastor

Cindy DeAngelo
Seminary Intern

Brian Diebold
Youth and Young Adult Ministry Intern

The Rev. Christiane Dutton
Minister of Taizé Prayer

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
Director of Mission Ministries

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*Associate in Ministry for Spiritual Life,
Stephen Ministry and Older Adults*

The Rev. Dr. J. Richard Szeremany
Director, Worship, Music and The Arts

Jon Tyillian
Associate Director of Music

Howard Turner
Chief of Security

Reaching Out Newsletter

Reaching Out is a monthly publication of East Liberty Presbyterian Church and is free to members and friends. Deadlines are the first Tuesday of the preceding month.

Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor



I've come to realize that most Christmas cards and nativity scenes get one important detail wrong. Can you think what detail it might be?

Picture in your mind the typical Christmas morning nativity scene. It usually includes some version of a barn or stable, complete with the expected cast of humans and animals. There may also be an angel hovering nearby with perhaps a star overhead. The scene might be painted on a canvas, printed on cards, captured in stained-glass, or incarnated

by chilly volunteers on a church's front lawn. The nativity is so familiar to us, we immediately recognize it whenever we see it and quickly notice if something is amiss with the arrangement.

According to the gospels, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but his real home was in Nazareth. Luke tells us about a census that required Joseph and Mary to travel to the ancestral city of King David. But this journey was an imposition, and as soon as it was feasible, the Holy Family left Bethlehem and never returned. As far as I can tell, Jesus never visited Bethlehem again during his lifetime.

It's true that our re-telling of the Christmas story always stresses how Joseph and Mary were strangers in town, and how the innkeeper could only offer them shelter in the stable. Part of the Christmas theology focuses on the themes of hospitality and how God's grace is commonly seen in surprising places, such as in the birth of a child to a non-resident alien in Bethlehem. Despite all that, our depictions of the nativity scene imply a level of permanence that is unmerited. When we think of Jesus growing up, we have no mental picture of his home in Nazareth. Instead we cling to the details of his birthplace in Bethlehem and to the one incident that occurred when Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents' knowledge.

Frederick Buechner has written, "Bethlehem is not home, but the place through which we must pass if ever we are to reach home at last." Our nativity scenes do not do justice to the transience, the discomfort and the personal upheaval that were present in Bethlehem for Joseph, Mary and others. Yet they had to pass through Bethlehem in order to continue their journeys of faith.

What is your "Bethlehem?" What is the thing you must pass through in order to reach home at last? It might be something that you see now in hindsight, a place or situation that could not have been avoided, but which had a tremendous impact on your life. It might be a place where you find yourself now – a place of discomfort or anxiety, a place of loss and transience. Regardless, it is something permanently on your "life map" and part of your "life story."

Nativity scenes never capture how quickly Bethlehem fades from view in terms of prominence in the gospel story. If they did, it might remind us that "these things too will pass," and that we pass through many Bethlehems between the dawn and sunset of our life's journey.

Yes, God is present in places that surprise us. Yes, God is near in times of transition and discomfort and imposition. But, God has also promised that we don't have to stay in those "Bethlehem" places forever. The message of hope is that we only pass through them while on the way home. May Christ walk beside you this day and all during this Christmas season.

Randy Bush

Advent Themes



The word "Advent" refers to the coming of Christ. During this time of year, it has a double meaning. It speaks about the coming of Christ as the infant born in Bethlehem, and the anticipated return of Christ, as the resurrected Lord inaugurating the future realm of God. It's a season of expectancy, as we look back to the wonder of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ and look ahead to the hope of the fulfillment of God's loving plans for all creation.

During the first three weeks of Advent, the words of the prophet Isaiah will be highlighted in the sanctuary worship services. Isaiah spoke words of comfort (Isa 40), words of promise about the glory of the Lord shining among us (Isa 60), and words of justice as we remember our task to repair ruined cities and broken lives (Isa 61). During the fourth week of Advent, the focus will shift to Mary, whose song of joy builds upon the prophet's earlier words (Luke 1). Amid the busyness, may the anticipated "Advent" of Christ remain foremost in your hearts *and minds*.

Stewardship Update



In November, the congregation generously brought forward its 2009 pledges, commitments, and stewardship offerings. This was the culmination of our campaign, **Keeping in Step with the Spirit** and celebrated through our movie "Generation to Generation: Renewed in the Spirit." We were reminded of our collective responsibilities to be stewards of gifts, and givers supporting our church ministries, so that the programs of ELPC can continue for generations to come.

At the time of print, a detailed update was not available. However, the overall response has been notably strong, including 100% support from ELPC officers.

If you have not yet pledged for 2009, and are able to do so, contact the church office, at **412.441.3800**, to receive a pledge form in the mail.

Working together, guided by God's grace, there is much that can be done to show compassion to those in need and give glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Lord.



Give Gifts that Really Matter

Support an alternative gift to the Garfield Community Farm, a ministry of Open Door, Valley View Presbyterian Church, and Open Hand Ministry.

You may support this project by making a tax deductible donation for as much as \$1,000, to support a summer intern, to \$10, to purchase wildflowers.

Your support of this community effort is greatly appreciated, and provides an opportunity to give a gift this holiday season that really does matter.

Call Patrice, at **412.441.3800 x30**, or look for donation sheets throughout ELPC.

Christmas Caroling

Sun., Dec 21, following the 11 worship

Once again, the Youth and Young Adult Ministry team is sponsoring a caroling event open to all members of



our ELPC family. We are spending the afternoon caroling and spreading holiday cheer at Shadyside hospital, and returning to ELPC for hot chocolate and cookies.

We will meet at ELPC at 1:30 pm, and return by 3:30 pm, for snacks.

Note: Youth are required to bring a permission slip, and children in grades 5 and younger are asked to be accompanied by an adult. Please RSVP to Pastor Heather, at **412.441.3800 x21**, by **Wed., Dec. 9**.

"We need the joy of Christmas 365 days a year! Keep your tree up all year. I do." – Chuck Carson

Christmas Concert & Carol Sing

Sat., Dec. 20, at 4 pm

Spend a delightful time of Christmas remembrances through scripture, music, and spoken words, as we recall once again the mystery and the wonder of "Emmanuel - God with us!" Hear a string quintet, harp, piano, congregational carols, and beautiful organ music. Enjoy John Bell's "Seven Songs of Mary", Vincent Lubeck's tender Christmas cantata "Welcome, Thou King of Glory," and Handel's "For Unto Us A Child Is Born."

Come and hear the story one more time and leave in the confidence that, as Phillips Brooks has written "Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight."

Church School Classes

Sundays, 9:45–10:45 am

Classes are offered for persons of all ages. Adult options are detailed on this page. Youth classes on page 5 – junior high (grades 6-8) and senior high (grades 9-12) – follow the *Seasons of the Spirit* curriculum to explore and apply biblical stories to their daily lives. Children's classes (by age) include *Baby Lapsit*, *Godly Play*, and *Seasons of the Spirit*.

Note: On **Dec. 14**, all classes are cancelled so that everyone can enjoy the pageant. Also, there will be no classes on **Dec. 28**, as we take a break during the Holiday Season.

Please join us on **Sun., Jan. 4**, for **Winter Rally Day**, as we kick off the new year with a light, pot-luck Continental breakfast in the second floor hallway, beginning at 9:30 am. Please bring a breakfast bread or fruit to share.

"For Christmas in East Liberty, I remember the East Liberty Christmas parade and decorating a live tree every year." – **Martha DeMarzi**

The Christmas Giving Tree

Reminder: On **Sundays, Nov. 30** and **Dec. 7**, the Giving Tree will be set up near the Highland Ave. entrance from 9:30 am–12:30 pm. If you wish to participate, stop by the Giving Tree, select a tag containing gift and recipient information, and leave your name and phone number on the donor tag. Deacons will be available to help with any questions or concerns.

Wrapped gifts, with tags securely attached, are due back to the church by noon on **Sun., Dec. 14**. If you would like to participate by donating money, make the check payable to "ELPC Giving Tree" and deliver it to the church office.

The Board of Deacons thanks ELPC for its support of this ministry.

Christian Education in Dec.

Rev. Heather Tunney Schoenewolf, Assoc. Pastor for Educational Ministries

CONTEMPORARIES CLASS *Facilitators: Joe Kennedy and Mary Alice Lightle*

The Contemporaries are an intergenerational fellowship of Christians seeking to live faithfully in the 21st Century. We encourage one another to grow spiritually and carry out ministries of compassion and justice. All are welcome!

Dec. 7: What's Your Season, led by Lora Turner and Damon Bethea
Ecclesiastes 3:1 reads, "There is a time for every thing and a season for every activity under heaven." Our life's journey includes many seasons. God has given us what we need to endure these times. Explore with us how we can make a difference and succeed in finding out some of the strategies for a sense of renewed spiritual progress.

Dec. 21: The Making of "Generation by Generation, Renewed in the Spirit," led by Brian Bonsteel

Come and rejoice as you listen to one of the most positive stories to characterize our congregational life together! Brian will take us behind the scenes as he describes the insights leading to an enormous appreciation for the ministries of ELPC. The people and the relationships will take center stage. Everyone of us becomes an integral part of what this movie truly represents. Don't miss this opportunity of enlightenment!

JOURNEY WITH SCRIPTURE *Facilitator: Jan Irvin*

Participants reflect while reading scriptures from the Revised Common Lectionary. We meet with a goal of personal transformation and movement towards a community of vision, justice, and steadfast love. The readings are distributed weekly for personal devotions.

Dec. 7: *Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; II Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8*

Dec. 21: *II Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38*

PARENTING CIRCLE *Facilitators: Frances Irvin and Anne Jackson*

The Parenting Circle is for anyone involved in parenting – singles, couples, adoptive parents, step-parents, grandparents, guardians, mentors, etc. We share experiences, resources, prayer and scripture, and explore how our faith builds and nourishes our family lives and helps nurture our parent/child relationships. We learn from one another ways to foster closer family relationships.

Dec. 7: Sharing Joys and Concerns

Dec. 21: To Be Announced

SEEKERS *Facilitators: Seekers Steering Committee*

The Seekers wish to grow in religious understanding, insight, faith and practice in a space for spiritual, intellectual and experiential exploration. Participants have been interested particularly in theological breadth, interfaith understanding, psychological and religious development and progressive Christian activism. Together we seek a broad, inclusive dialogue, experience and theology.

Dec. 7: Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts, led by Dr. Lois Lang, Associate in Ministry for Spiritual Life

This will be the final session of this course. Call Lois, at **412.441.3800 x41**, so materials are ready for you.

Dec. 21: Gifts of the Season, led by Leadership Team

Seekers will reflect on the essence of Christmas via music, readings, and stories.

Youth and Young Adult Events

Rev. Heather Tunney Schoenewolf, Assoc. Pastor for Educational Ministries

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth meet on Wednesdays, from 3:30-8 pm. In conjunction with Hope Academy, we offer time for homework, gym activities, free Hope Academy classes, dinner, Bible Study, and more! Participate as your schedule permits!

club one sixteen jr. and **sr.** meet for dinner at 6 pm, and Bible Study from 6:30-8 pm. We'll prepare for the Christmas Holiday by exploring the topics of **Gifts** and **Giving**.

Dec. 3: We'll discuss the **Gifts** we've received from God.

Dec. 10: We'll discuss **Giving**, and participate in some service projects.

Note: **club one sixteen** and Hope Academy will not meet on **Dec. 17, 24, or 31.**

Jr. High Service Project

Youth in grades 6-8 are invited to participate in our annual Christmas Service Project, where we purchase gifts for children who will be spending the holidays in foster care. After Christmas Pageant rehearsal on **Sat., Dec. 13**, we will share a light lunch at 11:30 am, go shopping, and wrap up our day at 3 pm. Please RSVP to Pastor Heather, by **Wed., Dec. 10**. A permission slip is required.

Confirmation Update

Eight youth from our faith community have begun their Confirmation Journey. We've discussed our encounters with God; the importance of the life, teachings and work of Jesus; and some of the tough questions of our faith, like how can Jesus be fully human and fully divine? We've shared our faith stories and holiday memories from past Christmas Pageants, like portraying baby Jesus, or finally being the star (no, not Jesus, but the "yonder star").

Please continue to pray for our youth as they continue on this important journey of faith. Our next class will meet on **Sun., Dec. 7**, from 12:30-3:30 pm.

Note: Youth in grade 9 or older interested in joining us on this journey, are invited to call Pastor Heather, at **412.441.3800 x21**, for details on how to get caught up.

Christmas Caroling

We are sponsoring a caroling event open to all members. Details on page 3.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

Those in their 20's and 30's are invited to join our warm and dynamic group for faith and fellowship! Visit us at www.myspace.com/youngadultselpc, or email Brian Diebold, at bdiebold@pts.edu.

Christmas Party

We'll gather for fun, food, and games on **Sat., Dec. 13**, from 2-7 pm, in the Parlor on the second floor. Come out for a relaxed afternoon of fellowship! Please RSVP to Brian, by **Wed., Dec. 10**.

Life in the Spirit Sunday School Class

Our **Faiths of the World** series will focus inward during the season of Advent, towards the branches within Christianity itself. Come explore the rich tapestry of our own faith. We meet in the Pastor's Conference Room, from 9:45-10:45 am.

Nov. 30: Eastern Orthodoxy

Dec. 7: Roman Catholicism

Dec. 21: Pentecostalism

Tuesday Evening Study Group

Join us on **Dec. 9** and **23**, from 7-9 pm, in the Parlor on the second floor, for a provocative discussion of the book, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time*, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. Contact Brian for a copy. Come whether you read the book or not!

Hope Academy

Linda Addlespurger, Director

Winter Term

Hope Academy of Music and the Arts' 2008-2009 course brochure and registration form are available online, at www.HopeAcademy.info. The deadline for registration for the winter term is **Mon., Dec. 15**. The Winter Term begins on **Mon., Jan 5**.



Shakespeare/Stage Combat Workshop

This new winter term course will help young actors explore Shakespeare's plays through voice, movement, acting and theater games, in preparation of the Pittsburgh Public Theater's Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest, in March.

Mission Trip to Malawi

ELPC has been invited by our partner church in Balaka, Malawi, to visit for about 10 days in late June or early July. If you're interested, call Kay Shissler, at **412.681.2047**.

Thursday Play Group!

The Young Children's Ministry Committee invites ELPC toddlers and babies (oh, and their parents!) to our Thursday morning playgroup.

Join us the third Thursday of each month from 9:30 am-12 pm, in the nursery. This is a great time for our kids to play together while moms/dads/caregivers socialize and support each other in this journey called parenting.

For more information, email Kim Ness, at kimjness@yahoo.com.

Wednesdays in Advent

The popular 45-minute Noon-Hour Organ Recital series is back!

Dec. 3: Jon Tyillian, *Associate Music Director, ELPC*

Dec. 10: Nick Will, *Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Altoona, Pa.*

Dec. 17: Amanda Plazek, *Duquesne University, Mary Pappert School of Music; Carly Noel Riley, Soprano; and JRichard Szeremany, Organist*

The concerts are free. Donations to the ELPC Organ Fund are appreciated. Stay for lunch in the Cathedral Cafe.

"Bill and I were married in this church on New Year's Day many years ago."
– Nancy Latshaw

Advent Crafts and Santa Shop

Sat., Dec. 6, from 10 am-1 pm

In cooperation with Presbyterian Women's Santa Shop event, the Christian Education Committee is hosting Advent Crafts for families.

Join us, as we prepare our hearts and homes to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Devotional material and crafts are available on Sunday mornings on the Christian Education table in the second floor hallway.



Children (ages four-grade 5) may shop for gifts, priced from \$.50-\$4. Visit with Santa; pictures cost \$.50.

Note: Parents and older children are not permitted in the Santa Shop. Shoppers must be old enough to shop without a parent. Santa's Helpers will help choose and wrap gifts. Please send a list of the people for whom your child needs to purchase gifts.

Classes After Taizé Prayer

The Rev. Christiane Dutton, Minister of Taizé Prayer

We will have a soup and bread supper, at 6 pm, prior to the Taizé Prayer services. A free-will offering of \$2.50 is appreciated. Classes begin at 8:15 pm.

Dec. 3: To Be Announced

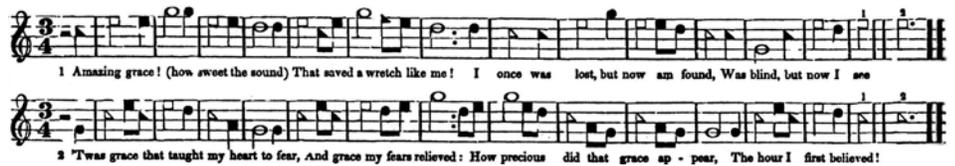
Dec. 10: Join Amnesty International's Global Write-a-Thon for Human Rights, Jane McCafferty and Patrick Tierney

December 10, International Human Rights Day, marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. You can honor this important day with action, by participating in Amnesty International's Global Write-A-Thon, the world's largest letter writing event. Join thousands of people across America and around the world, as they take action on behalf of prisoners of conscience, human rights defenders, victims of torture and individuals at risk.

Visit www.amnestyusa.org/individuals-at-risk/global-write-a-thon, for more information. Join us in this letter writing campaign. Resources will be provided.

Dec. 17: Shape Note Singing for Christmas, Charles Anderson

Enjoy singing tunes in three and four part harmony from the oldest American tune book in print. All tunes are taught, one part at a time! Beginners welcome!



Dec. 24: Christmas Eve - Special Time at 7 pm

Christ the Savior is Born! Join us for a different kind of Taizé service, involving the Christmas story with chants and carols, and a short meditation time of silence, a time just to be...in Christ's presence.

Note: There will be no Taizé service or class on New Year's Eve.

Presbyterian Women

Mary Alice Lightle, Moderator

Dec. 2: Horizons Bible Study

Please join us, at 10 am, in the second floor parlor as we continue our study of Jubilee!, Luke's Gospel for the Poor. We'll discuss "Captives Are Released" (Luke 8:22-39). A potluck lunch will follow. Please bring a salad or snack to share. Beverages and soup will be provided. Call Mary Alice Lightle, for more information, **412.682.1504**. Prepare for your eyes to be opened, your heart to be lifted up and to praise God.

Dec. 7-Jan. 18: Medicines and Food Money for Haiti

ELPC's Presbyterian Women are collecting prenatal vitamins, antifungal creams, yeast infection treatments (like Monistat), and money for food, to be taken to Haiti at the end of January. A collection box will be placed at the Highland Ave. entrance each Sunday through Jan. 18. Checks for food may be made payable to "FLM-Haiti" (Functional Literacy Ministry of Haiti). If you have questions, please call Carolyn Russ, at **412.421.7630**.

"When the milkman delivered milk to neighborhoods in the 1950s, he would save the tin foil from the milk tops and give the foil to the neighborhood children. We'd make Christmas decorations and ornaments for the holidays." – Connie Rivers

Grief Hurts Most at the Holidays

by Susan Whitaker

When someone is grieving, all days are difficult, but holidays are often especially painful, even years after the loss. On days formerly overflowing with joyous anticipation, the grieving person may be left feeling empty, exhausted and alone. Sometimes friends feel helpless and frustrated because they can't make things normal again. Here are some helpful suggestions.

Help them take care of themselves. Instead of saying "Call me if there's anything I can do," offer to help in specific ways, such as running errands, shopping for food, or wrapping presents.

Let the bereaved person choose what seems best for them, to be alone or get caught up in the holiday spirit. Offer multiple invitations. Perhaps they won't have enough energy for the first six activities, but can manage to do the seventh.

Encourage them to ignore the "shoulds." Help the person to establish new priorities, keeping those traditions that are still important to them, and discarding or delegating those activities that are not. Traditions can be changed if it is too stressful to continue them as if nothing was different. If holiday crowds are overwhelming, suggest that the person shop for presents by catalog.

Grief is isolating. Be there for your friend. There are no magic words you can say to remove the pain. Instead, say, "I'm so sorry, I miss him, too." Do not avoid mentioning the lost one. Most bereaved people are comforted to hear talk about the one who has died. Don't fear tears, for they are usually a healthy release. Sharing your holiday memories demonstrates that you haven't forgotten.

Consider taking time from your own busy holiday activities, and reach out to your friends. It may be the most appreciated and rewarding gift you can give!

Calling All Artists

Are you a performing, visual or literary artist? The Pentecost Arts Committee wants to know!

We are gearing up for a church-wide celebration of the arts and a broader inclusion of the arts in our church life. As part of this project, we want to identify artists (amateur and professional) within our church family by building a directory of talents.

Surveys are available on the bulletin board in the Highland Ave. hallway, or at the Security Desk. You also may contact Sue Schneider, at **412.242.6751**, or **sues1514@hotmail.com**.

2008 Donor Tax Deductions

To claim a charitable contribution deduction for the 2008 tax year, all donations must be received and/or postmarked by **Wed., Dec. 31**.

Checks that are written, mailed and postmarked in 2008 will be deductible in 2008, though they may not be received until 2009.

Note: pre-dating a check and delivering it in 2009 will not be accepted as a 2008 donor deduction.

"The first Christmas service I attended, I was an acolyte. When we got to the end, when we all stood in the dark with lit candles, that act made me feel so connected and remember why we were there - to feel connected to God, to Jesus, and to my fellow parishioners." – Ashley Birt

ELPC People

Good News

Congratulations to our new members and friends who joined in October. We welcome **Amy Ervin, Grant Ervin, Lori Haller, Matt Haller, Lavora Johnson, Daniel Kirk, Reginald Plato,** and **DaMisha Probst** by reaffirmation of faith; and **Rhonda Perroz,** and **Linda Devine** as friends!

Thanks

Thank you to the members and friends of ELPC who contributed to the Bible Fund. We purchased 212 New Revised Standard Version larger print bibles for the Sanctuary pew racks. At least half of these have been given in memory or in honor of someone.

- Worship, Music and Arts Committee

Men's Shelter Donations

In ELPC's continuing commitment to the EECM Men's Shelter located in our church, the Deacons are collecting donations for December. While the need has remained consistent, donations have declined recently.

We need your help!

The requested donations are **long underwear** (tops and bottoms) and **hoodie sweatshirts**. Please drop these items in the basket located in the Highland Ave. hallway.

Your support in the form of donations and of prayer is appreciated.



Food Pantry

The EECM Food Pantry provides food for people facing hunger in Pittsburgh.

Our congregation continues to answer the call in the struggle against hunger, but we still need help. Donations may be left in the baskets located throughout the hallways. December's "Food for the Month" is **canned tuna**.

The EECM Food Pantry is open from 1-3 pm, Mon.-Fri. For information on the many services EECM provides, please visit **www.eecm.org**.



East Liberty Presbyterian Church

The Cathedral of Hope
116 South Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

www.cathedralofhope.org

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“...inviting all to join our diverse, inclusive family of faith, transcending boundaries of race, class, ability, culture, age, gender and sexual identity to become one in Christ.”

Christmas isn't "Merry" for Everyone

Sun., Dec. 21, at 4 pm

Is everybody happy but me this Christmas? That question is often unspoken by those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, a friend, a job, or a broken relationship. It can also arise because of our own pain or illness, or that of a family member.

If you find yourself asking this question, join us on **Sun. Dec. 21**, at 4 pm, for a service in which you can find light in darkness and comfort for pain and grieving through music, scripture, prayer and fellowship with others who share your feelings.

World Healing Day

Wed., Dec. 31, from 6:45-8 am

Every year on Dec. 31, men, women, and children gather to participate in a global prayer activity – a planetary affirmation of peace, love, forgiveness, and understanding involving people across the globe in a simultaneous mind link. The purpose is to unite people in a common bond of love, assist in bringing our planet back into balance, and usher in a new era of Peace on Earth.



Please join us and add your love and light to this global gathering. The labyrinth will be available to walk all day, in the Social Hall.

New Year's Eve Worship

Wed., Dec. 31, at 7 pm

Our New Year's Eve worship will take place in the Chancel. ELPC Staff and congregation members will lead us in readings, prayers, meditations and song. We'll remember the year past, and look forward to the new year, appreciating and giving thanks for the goodness we've received and enjoyed, being grateful for God having led us through some of those Valleys of the Shadow. What will tomorrow bring? Perhaps we do have a vital role to play in the tomorrows of our lives.

Come spend the hour with us. Sit at Lord's Table and share His Bread and the Cup. When we have been filled with the grace and presence of God among us, we will gather in the McKelvy Room for our New Year's Eve dessert buffet.

Offices Closed: Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 25-26, in observance of Christmas; and **Thurs.-Fri., Jan. 1-2**, in celebration of the New Year.

"Each Autumn, I eagerly await hearing and singing 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' to usher in the season of Advent at ELPC." – Corinne Clendening