

The Traveler's Guide to Christmas



Christmas Pageant

Our annual Christmas Pageant will be held at 10 am, on **Sun. Dec. 13**, in the Sanctuary. This year's pageant is titled *The Traveler's Guide to Christmas* and was written by ELPC member Ashley Birt. ELPC's children and youth will lead us on a journey through the story of Jesus' birth.

Join us as we sing the carols of the season, and hear and see the good news proclaimed that "unto us a baby was born in Bethlehem, a Savior who is Christ the Lord!"

Note: There will be no Church School classes this day.

Pageant Rehearsal

All children and youth—birth through grade 8—are invited to participate in our Christmas Pageant. Rehearsal begins at 9:30 am, on **Sat., Dec. 12**. Please report to your Church School for costumes. Parents are invited to enjoy coffee and breakfast breads in the church office during rehearsal. After rehearsal, we will have a brief Christmas party together in Rooms 224 and 227.



Christmas Eve Services

Join us in the Sanctuary for Christmas Eve worship on **Thurs., Dec. 24**. Both services will feature the celebration of the Lord's Supper and candle lighting.

- **Friends and Family Service** will be at 5 pm. The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf will preach.
- **Candlelight Service** will be at 11 pm. Prelude music will begin at 10:30 pm. The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush will preach.



Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Journey Worship • 8:45 am

Theme: Family Tree

Dec. 6* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Dec. 13 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Dec. 20 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Dec. 27 *No Service*

Sanctuary Worship • 11 am

Dec. 6* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Dec. 13 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Dec. 20 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Dec. 27 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Labyrinth Prayer Walk

Mondays • 7 am–1 pm

Wednesdays • 9 am–9 pm

Taizé Prayer Service

Wednesdays • 7 pm

Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan

Contemplative Prayer

Wednesdays • 8 pm

An Exhibition of Madonnas and Mandalas

In awe of the Incarnation and in anticipation of the coming Christmas celebration, the Spiritual Life Committee will present a December-long exhibition of Madonnas and Mandalas from around the world, representing a breadth of traditions.



Take a few moments and stop by the Second Floor Parlor to come into the presence of these images and allow yourself to experience the awe and anticipation of this holy time.

East Liberty Presbyterian Church



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

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CathedralOfHope.org

Staff Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush
Pastor

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
Associate Pastor for Mission Ministries

The Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan
*Director of Spiritual Life Ministries and
Minister of Taizé Prayer*

Linda Addlespurger
Director of Hope Academy

Wil Forrest
*Coordinator of Young Adult
and Outreach Programs*

Sara Hackett
*Coordinator of Christian Education
and Youth Ministry*

Pamela M. Kimmel
Business Administrator

Paul Martin
Facilities Manager

Dr. Edward Alan Moore
Music Director and Organist

The Rev. Dr. Robert Chesnut
Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. J. Richard Szeremany
Music Director Emeritus

The Rev. Barbara McFarland
Parish Associate

Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor



Does the world go away when you close your eyes? It may seem that way, especially when you are a little child, but we all soon learn that the world remains in place even when we cannot see it. There is a permanency to life even when we close our eyes to part of it, or look away for a moment, or our attention wanders to something else.

The nature of mass media today, coupled with our collective, short attention spans, sadly means that we tend to think that problems have gone away when they no longer make the headlines. It is like the old adage—"Out of sight, out of mind." We may be sincerely concerned about a crisis overseas, an injustice nationally, a pressing need locally, but within a few days or weeks we discover that we've "moved on" and have not given this issue much thought for a while.

As an example, last year more than 70,000 unaccompanied children made their way into America from Latin America countries like Honduras and El Salvador. It created a huge crisis on our southern border, as well as a national debate on how to care for these children. Yet one year later, it would appear that this crisis has been resolved, since no headlines or in-depth reports on the subject are seen in the media. But the issue did not magically go away. In fact, the U.S. has been pouring money into Mexico for the express purpose of containing the flow of illegal migrants down on Mexico's southern border. If the men, women and children are captured before they enter Mexico, then the crisis is significantly lessened on American soil.

But the justice issue has not gone away. And this "solution" involves even more egregious human rights violations being inflicted upon vulnerable families trying to flee the drug lords, prostitution, and violence of their homelands. I realize that there is no easy answer for all this; however, shutting our eyes and telling ourselves that the media silence on this issue means that things have all been worked out are unacceptable responses for people of faith.

The season of Advent reminds us to keep our eyes wide open. The kingdom of God is breaking into our realm and with it comes the Lord's standards of justice, compassion, and righteousness for all. The season of Christmas reminds us to look to the margins and borderlands of this world to see the in-breaking of God's truth, wisdom and power. In a forgotten stable during a time of frantic government registration, a child was born who would change human history forever. It is precisely for this reason that the watchword of Advent "Be alert!" is combined with the promise of Christmas "Unto us a child is born," making this month one of the most important times of the year for everyone.

Randy Bush

Mark Your Calendars for Winter Rally Day

As a reminder, there will be no Church School classes on **Sun., Dec. 13, Dec. 27, or Jan. 3**. Classes will resume on Winter Rally Day, **Sun., Jan. 10**.

The Giving Tree

Every year, our Deacons organize the Christmas Giving Tree to benefit children and families from East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM), our ELPC Family Enrichment Ministry and Christian Education department.



Stop by The Giving Tree near the Information Desk before or after our Taizé service on **Wed., Dec. 2**, or from 9:30 am–12:30 pm, on **Sun., Dec. 6**.

Wrapped gifts with tags, are due back in the church office by noon on

Sun., Dec. 13. To make a monetary donation, please make checks out to “ELPC Giving Tree” and deliver it to the church office.

The Deacon Board thanks the congregation for its enthusiastic support of this ministry.

Session News

At the recent Session meeting, the following items were discussed:

- A congregational meeting was called for Nov. 8, at which time **Pastor Patrice** was presented as a candidate for the associate pastor for mission ministries position. She will be examined at Presbytery on Dec. 10 and ordained as a PC(USA) pastor on Jan. 17.
- Updates were given on our **Stewardship Campaign**, as well as for Commitment Sunday, Dec. 13, for the **Building Our Future** capital campaign.
- **Four new members** were received in November; **four baptisms** were celebrated in October and November; and a **group of “friends”** of ELPC were scheduled to be received on Nov. 22.

Mission Matters

The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy, Associate Pastor for Mission Ministries

• 2015 Christmas Joy Offering

“**PROMISES MADE PROMISES KEPT**” is the theme for the 2015 Christmas Joy Offering, which is received during Advent—a time when we remember God’s promises to us; a time when we gather together and wait in hope for the coming of the promised Emmanuel, God with us. And God, who has promised, is faithful (Hebrews 10:23), so on Christmas Day, we celebrate that the promise is kept in the birth of Jesus Christ!

Since the 1930’s the Christmas Joy Offering has supported those in need of help and hope, providing financial assistance to those who have dedicated their lives to the church and supporting racial/ethnic education and leadership development for students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

ELPC will receive the Christmas Joy Offering on **Sun., Dec. 20**. The ELPC Mission Board thanks you in advance for your support of this vital offering.

• Charis Alternative Gifting

As you plan your Christmas gift giving, please consider a gift to an organization in ELPC’s *Charis Alternative Gift Guide*. Choosing a gift from *Charis* allows you to bless the gift recipient and a worthy local or international ministry, too. Look for the *Charis* guides throughout ELPC. Give a gift that keeps on giving!

• Repairing Homes, Hearts, and Minds

ELPC has participated in the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts since it hit the East Coast three years ago. Since then, 21 ELPC members and friends have undertaken four, week-long mission trips to Point Pleasant, N.J.

In October, nine people from the ELPC community joined with others from the Lend a Hand Foundation on a final mission trip to assist with the residential recovery effort. Over the course of the week, the volunteers provided more than 700 hours of work at five residences in need of repair and restoration.

The hours offered are important in that communities are granted FEMA funds for every volunteer hour, but the hours mean even more to homeowners and communities who are grateful that others understand they are still struggling for a sense of normalcy. The repair and restoration is not just to physical structures, however. Hearts and minds are repaired, the love of God is shared, and hope is restored.

While this may have been ELPC’s final trip to Point Pleasant, our work and faith relationship with Lend a Hand Foundation and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will continue.



“God is not unjust, God will not forget your efforts and the love you have shown for God’s namesake when you served and continue to serve.”—Hebrews 6:10



Christian Education

Note: Classes begin at 9:45 am.

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf, Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries

Contemporaries *Second Floor Parlor*

Facilitator: Mary Alice Lightle

Following *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, we will use Dr. Kenneth Bailey's scholarship to peel away centuries of Greek, Roman, and European paint from the birth narrative of Jesus, to reveal the classic story within.

Dec. 6: The Genealogy of Jesus and Joseph the Just

Among a genealogy of 40 men, why does Matthew include four women? Charlie and Rita Nordquist will lead our discussion of Matthew 1:1–21.

Dec. 20: The Savior, the Wise Men, and the Vision of Isaiah

Who did Jesus come to save? Where did the wise men come from? What do Jerusalem and Isaiah 60 have to do with Christmas? Mark Blank will lead our discussion of Matthew 2:1–12 and Isaiah 60:1–7.

Journey with Scripture *Second Floor Library*

Facilitator: Jan Lyle Irvin

Mary, the expectant mother of Jesus, exclaims to her relative Elizabeth, "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant"—Luke 1:47–48. Like Mary, our spirits can rejoice for the life being born within us: the Word made flesh—a maturing love in Christ for our family, neighbors, and for the world. Join us as we seek an Advent and Christmas of peace with justice.

Dec. 6: Led by Lora Bethea; Malachi 3:1–4; Luke 1:68–79; Philippians 1:3–11; Luke 3:1–6;

Dec. 20: Led by Jan Irvin; Micah 5:2–5a; Luke 1:46b–55; Psalm 80:1–7; Hebrews 10:5–10; Luke 1:39–55

Seekers *Room 234*

Facilitator: Gwen Puza

Dec. 6: El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

El Día de los Muertos is celebrated in Mexico on Nov. 1. Regina Dosal Tramer, who grew up in Mexico, will explain the significance of the day, the meaning of various altars that are built for the dead, origins of the costumes, and the significance of *pan de muerto* (bread for the dead).

Dec. 20: Gifts of the Spirit

We will share music and Christmas memories. ELPC members and friends from other lands will tell us about their Christmas traditions, including folks from Argentina, British Virgin Islands, China, Congo, Mexico, Pakistan, and others.

Soul Food *Third Floor Music Room*

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

Dec. 6: An Altar in the World

We will begin discussing chapter 6. Class will be led by Joe Hajdu, Steve Evrard, and Sel Whitaker.

Dec. 20: An Altar in the World

We will conclude our discussion of chapter 6. Class will be led by Joe Hajdu, Michele Bossers, and Judy Roberts.

Young Adults *Pastor's Conference Room*

Facilitator: Wil Forrest

Dec. 6: Coming Out...as a Christian

We will explore what it means to be a Christian and other related topics in light of a common reading experience—*The Cross in the Closet*.

Advent Devotionals are Available

Advent is a special season of joyful anticipation, as we await the celebration of the birth of Jesus, God with us. To help persons of all ages draw near to Christ during their Advent journey, the Christian Education Ministry Team has purchased Advent devotionals as our gift to you!

The devotionals are geared toward different age groups. Please visit the Christian Education Table on the second floor and select the one that best serves you and your family.

Let Heaven and Nature Sing

A Christmas Tree can point our eyes to the Savior, just as its shape points to heaven above. The sparkling lights remind us of the sparkling skies over Bethlehem. The shiny decorations remind us of the Wise Men's precious gifts. Each day, add a sticker to the tree, read the Bible verse, learn about the symbols on each ornament, and see how the Christmas Tree points the way to our heavenly Savior.

"Hark the Glad Sound"

The glad sounds of beautiful music heralding the coming of Christ have long been a hallmark of the Advent and Christmas season. Through this collection, explore the meaning behind 12 familiar carols. Verse after verse, let the message of these wondrous melodies of our salvation in Christ put a joyous song in your heart.



Hope Academy of Music and the Arts

Linda Addlespurger, Director

Sun., Dec. 13: Holiday Recitals 2–6 pm

Hope Academy's young singers and musicians will present recitals at ELPC! Everyone is invited and it's all **FREE!** The Flute Choir (under the direction of Kristine Rominski) and Suzuki Violin 2 and 3 students (under the direction of Kathleen Andrews) will perform. For more information, see the event listing at **ELPC.church**.

This is a great opportunity for families who are interested in private music instruction for their children. Come and see Hope Academy's program in action and meet our teaching artists.



Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Sat., Dec. 5 | 12 | 19: Youth Basketball 5–8 pm

Guys in grades 9–12 are invited to play basketball in the ELPC Gym.

Sun., Dec. 6: DG2! Community Service Projects 12:30–3:30 pm

ELPC will join members of Rodef Shalom for lunch and fellowship, and then choose between two projects to engage in. The first project will be to lead Bingo games for the residents at Shadyside Manor. The second opportunity will be to prepare a meal at ELPC for approximately 40 individuals who are staying at the Ronald McDonald House.



Sat., Dec. 12: Junior-High Service Project 11:30 am–2:30 pm

Youth in grades 6–8 are invited to go shopping and choose gifts for children who are in foster care. We will eat lunch after our Christmas Pageant rehearsal and then walk to Target. A permission slip is required. RSVP to Sara Hackett at **412.673.2926** or **SaraH@coh.net**.

Sun., Dec. 20: Confirmation Class 12:30–3:30 pm

Confirmation Class will meet in the Second Floor Parlor for a discussion about the atonement of Christ and the meaning of the sacraments. Lunch will be provided.

club one sixteen

Wednesdays, from 3:30–7:30 pm

Parents and friends are invited to join us at 6 pm, on **Wed., Dec. 16**, for a **christmas drama**, put on by youth in grades 1–6. Dinner will be served following the performance.

Note: club one sixteen will not meet on **Wed., Dec. 23, Dec. 30, or Jan. 6.**



Young Adult Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs

Fri., Dec. 4: First Friday @ Oglebay 7 pm

Meet at the church and we will spend an evening enjoying warm cocoa, delicious cookies, and dazzling lights as we take a little road trip to enjoy Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights to celebrate the season! Make sure to contact Wil in advance to ensure your seat in the church van. Learn more at **Oglebay-resort.com/fol.htm**.

Sat., Dec. 12: Dinner and a Show 5 pm

Come celebrate the season with a potluck dinner in the Second Floor Parlor, and then attend the Renaissance City Choir's holiday concert in the Sanctuary. See Wil about tickets and what you plan to bring for the potluck by **Sun., Dec. 6.**



YAM is for you. Your friends are always welcome, too! To RSVP, ask questions, or simply to talk, contact Wil Forrest at **Wil@coh.net** or **412.441.3800 x14**.

ELPC People

If you have news to share, please call Gloria Knopp at 412.441.3800 x22.

Good News

- Congratulations to those in our faith family who were baptized on Oct. 25:
 - **Brian Cook, Jr.**, son of Brian and Satnarine Cook
 - **Lucy Ferda**, daughter of Tucker and Libby Ferda
- Please join us in welcoming our new members who joined on Nov. 1: **Amy Rockwell, Darlene McGregor, Arthur “Jack” Kerr, and Hannah Moon** (pictured left to right).



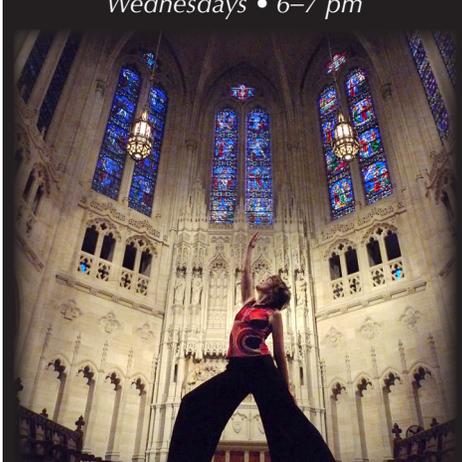
Prayers

We offer our prayers and condolences to family and friends of those who recently passed away:

- ELPC member LaRoux Hopper
- Tanya McClendon-Todd's sister, Janice

Cathedral Yoga

Prayerful Yoga in a Sacred Space
Wednesdays • 6–7 pm



FREE (Donations Appreciated)
Bring your own mat

Presbyterian Women

Sherry Anderson and Kelli Booher, Co-Moderators

Come to the Waters Bible Study Second Floor Parlor
Tues., Dec. 1 10 am | Mon., Dec. 7 7 pm

In our next lesson, we will explore “Dangerous Waters—God’s Deliverance” based on Joshua 3 and Psalm 69:1–3. The Israelites need to cross the Jordan River; the psalmist is emotionally and spiritually drowning—everyone needs God’s help. God does not disappoint.



A potluck lunch will follow the Tuesday morning study; please bring a snack or salad to share. Childcare will be available for the Monday evening study.

Presbyterian Women Elect New Officers

A new slate of officers has been elected to serve until September 2016. The team includes co-moderators Sherry Anderson and Kelli Booher; secretary Peta Harrigan Cole; and treasurer Nancy Wright. Members at large include Sue Bailey, Sandy Brake, Cami Needle, Elaine Phillips, and Kay Shissler.

Upcoming Diaper Drive in January

Next month, we will host a Diaper Drive for the Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank. Keep an eye out for deals on diapers if you are out Christmas shopping!

Spiritual Life

The Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan, Director of Spiritual Life Ministries

Sat., Dec. 5: Images of God: Creating God 9 am–4 pm

Join us for a day of rest, appreciation, and creativity. In the morning, we will explore how God has been imagined in art and poetry. In the afternoon, we will experience creative exercises to help us encounter the image of God within us and express that image in some creative way. No artistic or poetic skills are required! Lunch will be provided.

Sat., Dec. 19: Silent Saturday 9 am–4 pm

Prepare your heart and spirit for the Silent Night ahead by being totally present to the one who Jesus called Abba, wrapped in the silent community of the Body of Christ. Come when you can, stay as long as you are able, and leave when you must. Bring a bag lunch if you will be here at noon. See our schedule on the Spiritual Life Bulletin Board or at ELPC.church.

Thurs., Dec. 31: World Healing Day 6:55–8 am

Since 1986, millions of people continue to gather in prayer on this day, at the same moment in time for a planetary affirmation of peace, love, and forgiveness. Join us in body or spirit for a walk on the Labyrinth and meditation in the Social Hall. Add your love and light to this moment of oneness.

Thurs., Dec. 31: 2015 Year-End Examen 8 am–12 pm

Mark the end of 2015 with a contemplative morning of reflection and examination in the Second Floor Parlor. After a light breakfast, we will look closely at the past year and get in touch with what God has given us to learn, notice, and savor in the past 365 days. End this year with reverence so that you might move into the New Year with awareness and peace.

LGBTQ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs



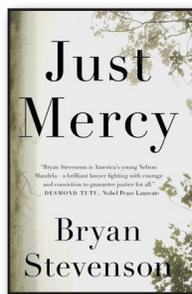
Our next Spiritual Gathering will be at 4 pm, on **Sat., Dec. 19**. Also, all are encouraged to support our RCC friends at their holiday concert at 7:30 pm, on **Sat., Dec. 12** at ELPC.

To learn more about ELPC's LGBTQ Ministry, please contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x14**. All people are welcome!

**God created you. God loves you.
Be yourself.**

Just Mercy Book Discussion

The Justice Committee will sponsor a book study/discussion of Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* on **Sat., Jan. 23**, from 9–11 am. Stevenson is a Harvard-educated activist lawyer seeking justice for wrongly convicted prisoners on death row. This book tells the stories of these men and their families, and makes a compelling case for mercy. You will want to read the book before our discussion. Books can be obtained from public libraries, Amazon, or local bookstores.



Stevenson also will be a featured lecturer at the Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures series on **Mon., Jan. 25**. The Justice Committee has purchased 10 tickets at a group rate that will be made available to those wishing to purchase them.

How do you Serve?

by Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs

Over the past few years, ELPC volunteers have been adding links to a large chain of service. Each link represents one way that person serves. I wanted to share some of the good works done this year, so I asked ELPC, "How do you serve?"



Greeter • Donation Tteam • Crucifer • VCS • WMA Committee • Food for **club one sixteen** • Help with mailings • Visit shut ins • Teach/substitute teach Sunday school • Ushering • Hurricane Sandy mission trips • Mentoring • Garfield Community Farm • Mission Board • M&O Committee • F4T Meal Team • Toymakers • Session • Open Hand Ministry • Yardwork at church • Holy Spirit Breakfast Club • Liturgist • Deacon • Tour guide • Provide

rides to church • Peace Committee • Intercessory prayer • Knitters • Handbell choir • Welcome tables • Bread donations • Justice Committee • Singing in choir

For more information, contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x14**. To learn more about serving or becoming a member of the weSERVE list, visit ELPC.church/programs/iSERVE.

Feeling Crafty?

Knitting Group: Join us on **Tues., Dec. 1**, from 1–3 pm, in Room 244. Yarn donations are appreciated. Help us finish up our projects for The Chapel Market Christmas tree.

Toy Makers: All handy crafters are invited to join us in the Sewing Room on **Wed., Dec. 2**, from 9 am–12 pm, as we prepare for our annual sale (see article below) and get our toys ready for distribution. We also will celebrate with some lunch and fellowship.

Sewing Group: Our group will not meet in December.

The craft groups wish to thank the congregation for their support with donations, prayers, and ideas for where we can put our skills to work.

Questions? Contact Diane Jackson at **412.441.6021** or dnjcks@verizon.net.

Annual Toy Sale

The ELPC Toymakers' year-long efforts will culminate with our annual Christmas sale after Sanctuary worship on **Sun., Dec. 6**, in the **McKelvy Room**. Handmade, holiday-related items made of wood and stained glass, as well as some toys and puzzles will be available.

Proceeds from the sale (you decide how much to give) will keep the Toymakers in wood and paint (and the occasional tool) for the year ahead. ELPC members have always been most generous. We appreciate your support!





“...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.”

Building Closed

The ELPC office will be closed on **Fri. | Mon., Dec. 25 | 28**, for Christmas, and **Fri., Jan. 1**, for New Year's Day.

Christmas in East Liberty

On **Fri., Dec. 18**, at 7:30 pm, The Brass Roots, ELPC's resident brass ensemble, will return for another festive concert with Dr. Ed Moore at the organ. Joining them this year will be ELPC's Chancel Choir and the Fox Chapel Area High School Madrigal Singers, who will provide a variety of choral arrangements and lead the audience in the singing of Christmas carols.

Please invite your friends and family to join us in the Sanctuary for this joyous concert! A freewill offering will be received.



Let's Commit to Building Our Future

Every ELPC member and friend is encouraged to review the *Building Our Future* capital campaign materials that were mailed last month. During both worship services on **Commitment Sunday, Dec. 13**, we will conduct our first in-pew requests for the campaign. We ask that you prayerfully consider your gift, as we dedicate our efforts as one community. It is important that we reach our goal of \$2.25 million in congregational support in order to release matching funds from local foundations.



As part of this generation of ELPC members and friends, help us support our present and future ministry goals, as we—with God's help—build our future, together. More details are available near the Information Desk and at **ELPC.church**.

Wrapping Up our Fall Stewardship Campaign

Pledges for our fall Stewardship Campaign, *Faith in Action*, will be accepted until **Tues., Dec. 29**, for credit in 2015. The congregation's generous support of our ongoing mission, personnel, and property costs helps us maintain our wide range of church programs. Questions? Contact Deborah Marx, our church bookkeeper.



“Be not hearers who forget, but doers who act.”—James 1:25