**TIME OF PREPARATION**

“God, it would be nice to recognize angels and say, ‘OK. Here am I.’ But since you don’t often come with shining wings, in a flash of light, give us your watchful Spirit that we may resolve our perplexity, detect your presence, and answer your call to be your servant; through Jesus Christ. Amen.” — Brian Wren

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

Please join in singing the first two carols with the bell choir.

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

“Ding, Dong! Merrily on High”

arr. Michael Bedford

**WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS**

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

*SHARING GOD’S PEACE*

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes. The peace of Christ be with you.

People: Y también contigo. And also with you.

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY (from John 1)**

Kimberly Gonxhe, Gregory Howard

Leader: Before the Word became flesh, God sent the messenger John to go ahead and testify to the one who was to come.

People: He came as a witness, so that all might believe through him.

Leader: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

People: This light of Christ embodies God’s love for us and shines through us that we might love one another.

The first three candles are lit.

Leader: We light candles of peace, hope, and love that healing may take place around us and God’s justice be done everywhere.
**Procesional Hymn #88** (verses 1, 2, 5 and 6 only)  
“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”  

**Call to Confession**  
The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf  

**Prayer of Confession**  
The Rev. Schoenewolf  
Merciful God, we know you love justice, yet we persist in wrongdoing and evil. We know you have given us the gifts of the Spirit, yet we quench the Spirit among us. We know you have given us the words of the prophets and the Word, Christ the Lord, yet we disregard what we have seen and heard from you. Forgive us this day. Restore us by your grace. Come once more into our hearts, our lives, and our world. Amen.

**Assurance of God’s Pardon**  
The Rev. Schoenewolf  
Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel!  
People: En Jesucristo tenemos perdón. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. ¡Alaben a Dios! Praise God!

**Sung Response Hymn #88** (verse 7 only; remain seated)  
“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”  
The bell choir will play an introduction and one verse by themselves. Please join in singing verse 7 as printed below along with the choir.

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**Gospel Lesson**  
Luke 3:7-18  
Eric and Kathy Logan

**Reception of New Members & Friends**  
Members: Timothy and Courtney Chaplin, Lorraine Commeret, Jim DiGiorgio, Katlyn Dougherty, Eric Jester, Mark Motyl, Charles and Janet Stevens, Hugh and Lucie Van der Veer, Daniel Zander

**Moments with Our Children**  
Sara Hackett  
Children of any age are welcome to come to the steps of the chancel for Moments with our Children. Those who have completed first grade or younger are invited to attend our Extended Session program for the remainder of our worship time in the Nursery Suite on the first floor.

**Hymn #106**  
“Prepare the Way, O Zion”  
Bereden Våg För Herran

**New Testament Lesson**  
Romans 15:1-6, 13  
The Rev. Dr. Bush

**Special Music**  
“Someone to Fall Back On”  
by Jason Robert Brown  
Jon Erik Schreiber, soloist

I am no prince, I am no saint, I am not anyone’s wildest dream.  
But I can stand behind and be someone to fall back on …

**Sermon**  
“Advent Waiting: Personal Hope”  
The Rev. Dr. Bush

**Time of Silent Reflection**

**Prayers of Intercession & The Lord’s Prayer**  
The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
The Lord’s Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español) or on pg. 45 (한국어) in the Glory to God hymnal.
OFFERING INVITATION

We offer our gifts in response to God’s love, and the grace of Jesus Christ, which we seek to make known through the ministries of this congregation.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Jesus Christ the Apple Tree”

Elizabeth Poston

The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be compared with Christ the apple tree.
H is beauty doth all things excel: by faith I know, but never can tell
The glory which I now can see in Jesus Christ the apple tree.
For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see tis found in Christ the apple tree.
I’m weary with my former toil, here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be, of Jesus Christ the apple tree.
This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive,
Which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ the apple tree.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607

Old Hundredth


* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes. The Lord be with you.
People: Y también contigo. And also with you.
Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones. Lift up your hearts.
People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor. We lift them up to the Lord.
Leader: Damos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: Es justo dar gracias y alabanzas a Dios. It is right to give God thanks and praise.
Leader: Gracious God, as you are always with us, may we give thanks in all times and places. As you share so generously with us, may we share generously with others. Send us out as messengers of hope, using our body, soul, and spirit to your glory. In Christ’s name. Amen.

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #100

Star of the County Down

“My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout”

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Dr. Bush

ELPC Ringers

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” arr. Ruth Elaine Schram

Our worship concludes with the postlude. For the benefit of those who wish to listen to the postlude, please refrain from visiting with your neighbors until you have left the sanctuary, or until the postlude has concluded.
Please remember to turn off cell phones during worship. Hearing assistance devices and large print bulletins are available from the ushers.

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♦ Participants in Today’s Service

Preaching: The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush
Liturgists: The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
            The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
            Sara Hackett
            Kimberly Gonxhe
            Gregory Howard
            Eric and Kathy Logan
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore, Organist/
            Music Director
            Gabriel T. D’Abruzzo, Music Associate
            ELPC Chancel Choir
            ELPC Ringers
            Jon Erik Schreiber, soloist
Acolytes: Sonia and Annabel Degenholtz
Beadle: Matt Stufft
Crucifer: Isaac Degenholtz
Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

♦ Fellowship Time

Following the service, please join us in the McKelvy Room for our Fellowship Time in honor of our new members and friends, sponsored by ELPC’s Membership & Outreach committee. All are welcome!

♦ Worship Flowers

We would like to extend a special thank you! to ELPC member Suzan Krauland and her business partner Carolyn Walker from Bloom Brigade for preparing the Sanctuary flowers to enhance our worship space.

♦ Christmas Eve Worship

There will be no Journey service on Dec 24 and 31.

11 am...Sanctuary Worship.
          The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy preaching.

5 pm ...Friends and Family Service.
          Includes communion.
          The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf preaching.

11 pm ...Candlelight Service.
          Prelude music begins at 10:30 pm.
          Includes communion.
          The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush preaching.

Extended Session
After the Moments with the Children during the 11 am Sanctuary service, a children’s ministry is offered with songs, Bible or mission stories, prayer, sharing and creative activities. A simple snack is served. In an effort to best know and care for your child, we ask that all families fill out a green Extended Session “Ticket” and that your child bring it with him/her to Extended Session every week.
* Young Children’s Ministry for infants and toddlers (up to age 3) — First Floor Nursery. Every Sunday.
* Preschool age children (through grade 1) — Room 151.

♦ Weekday Worship

Labyrinth Prayer Walk
A 35-foot floor mat with curved paths leading inward; an ancient tool for walking and seated meditation.
          Mondays, 7 am to 1 pm
          Wednesdays, 9 am to 9 pm

Taizé Sung Prayer
Chants and periods of meditative silence modeled after the Taizé community in France.
          Wednesdays, 7 pm

Prayer Room (Room 135, in Highland Ave hallway)
Come to sit and pray in silence. Come to experience the quiet in the midst of the wonderful busyness that is ELPC.
          Open everyday

Welcome Visitors!

We are grateful to have you join us for worship this morning and ask you to register your name in our Friendship Book.

To learn more about our programs, church activities and volunteer services, we invite you to:

Stay after today’s service for our Fellowship Time in the McKelvy Room. Identify yourself as a newcomer, and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have about ELPC.

Pick up a copy of our newsletter, the Reaching Out, either in the Narthex or at the Hospitality Desk near the Highland Avenue doors.

Attend an Inquirers’ Class to learn more about ELPC and Presbyterian theology. Please contact Gloria Knopp for more info or to register for future classes (GloriaK@coh.net).

Call the Church Office (412.441.3800), or visit the ELPC website at www.ELPC.church.
TODAY AT ELPC

Christmas Joy Offering
The Christmas Joy Offering will be received at all worship services this morning. Please see today’s bulletin insert for details.

Reception of New Members & Friends
If you have been visiting ELPC and desire to affiliate with us as a friend, simply come forward when invited during the 11 am service, and we’ll sign you up! Friends receive church mailings and can be part of our active church life; the only caveat is that they are not able to serve as church officers (Elders or Deacons).

Confirmation Class Meeting
All confirmation participants are invited to meet in the 2nd floor Parlor from 12:30–3:30 pm today for lunch and discussion.

Support the Annual Christmas Giving Tree
If you selected a tag from the Giving Tree, please give your wrapped gifts to the Deacons during today’s Fellowship Time. If you would like to participate by donating money, please make the check out to ELPC Giving Tree.

Advent Devotionals
The Christian Education Committee is pleased to offer Advent devotionals. They are available on the 2nd floor Christian Education table.

Today’s Deacons-On-Duty (DOD)
Today’s Journey service DOD is Beth Minnigh. The Sanctuary service DOD is Susan Spangler.

Advent Mini-Retreat Cancelled
The Spiritual Life Advent Mini-Retreat scheduled today after the 11 am worship service is cancelled. Our apologies for any inconvenience.

Free Blood Pressure Screenings
Free blood pressure screenings are available after today’s 11 am service in the 1st floor Library. All are welcome!

Church Tour — Dec 24
Please gather in the front of the Sanctuary after the 11 am worship service on Sunday, Dec 24 to join the tour of the Sanctuary and Chapel. All are welcome!

Youth Ministry Event — Dec 28
Please contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net) to participate in DG2 (Doing Good Together) — a partnership between ELPC and Rodef Shalom — from 3-8 pm on Thursday, Dec 28.
As a caring congregation of faith, we ask you to remember the following people in your prayers:

Valire Carr Copeland’s mother Reva,
Carol Chontos’ father David,
Jan Herzer’s friends Mike, Dan and Nicole,
Morris Jordan, Devo Ihonde-Hughes’ mother Victoria,
Pam Kimmel’s niece Jen, Lee Lewand,
Rachel Mackey’s stepfather Haven,
Mike Maiolo, Gail Noden,
Dominic Odim’s brother,
Stephen Simpson-Hunt,
Pat Valoon and Antwone Wright.

Congratulations to Joel & Beth Minnigh on the birth of their grandson Gideon.

There are Prayer Boxes, with cards for prayer requests, available on the tables in the Narthex and East Transept entrances to the Sanctuary.

No Committee Meetings This Week

First Friday @ Pittsburgh Potluck — Jan 5
Yinz come to S’liberty to enjoy a very Pittsburgh potluck and evening together at First Friday @ Pittsburgh Potluck on Jan 5 at 7 pm in the 2nd floor Parlor. Sign up with Wil to bring 'Burg fare such as pierogi, salad with fries, brats, pretzel jello salad, burnt almond torte or just contribute to the cookie table. The evening will be filled with food, friends and games all with Pittsburgh flair. This is a TRAIL young adult event.

Unhanging of the Greens — Jan 7
Please join us on Sunday, Jan 7 after the 11 am worship service for Unhanging of the Greens when we will pack away our Christmas decorations for future use. Snacks will be provided for those able to help that day.

Taizé Epiphany Procession — Jan 10
All are invited to join us for a special Taizé Epiphany Procession on Wednesday, Jan 10 at 7 pm. The procession will begin in the Chapel.

LGBTQ Ministry — Jan 14
All LGBTQ folks and allies are invited to be part of the LGBTQ Ministry. The next Spiritual Gathering will be on Sunday, Jan 14 at 12:30 pm. See Wil for details or to attend. All people are welcome!

Silent Retreat — Jan 26 to 28
Setting time apart for silence and reflection is a time honored tradition for gaining insight into one’s own life and deepening one’s own relationship with God. Join us from Jan 26-28 to share the silence with others on the journey at Kearns Spirituality Center near North Park from dinner on Friday evening until brunch on Sunday. Registration is required and includes an opportunity to meet with a spiritual director. The cost is $135, but scholarship assistance is available. Please contact the Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan’s office for more info or to register (412.441.3800 x111).

The Chapel Market
The Chapel Market will be open from 5–7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month, and will continue to be open every Monday from 10 am–Noon. As the weather gets colder, donations of winter coats and boots are needed. To volunteer, please contact Linda and Harold Deiss (deisshl@consolidated.net).

Library Resources are Available
As renovations begin on the space that houses our current Library, we are thinning out our collection. Books and periodicals that will no longer be kept in our permanent collection will be available to congregation and community members for free starting on Dec 20 through Jan 2. Any remaining books will be made available outside of our Church School classrooms on Rally Day before being donated.