Special Guest Preachers in November
This month, it is our pleasure to welcome two guest preachers to ELPC.

On **Sun., Nov. 16**, the Rev. Brian Ellison, executive director of the Covenant Network, will be preaching as part of our celebration of Full Inclusion Sunday. Members of the Renaissance City Choir also will be here to provide special music.

Under the Rev. Ellison’s leadership, the Covenant Network challenges our denomination to uphold standards of inclusivity and welcome for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, and advocates for marriage equality in both church and state practices.

Then on **Sun., Nov. 30**, Ashley Birt will be our guest preacher at our Journey and Sanctuary Worship services, as part of her requirements for ordination in the PC(USA).

Ashley is a long-time member of ELPC, a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York, and a candidate under care of Pittsburgh Presbytery seeking ordained ministry. She has served part-time on our staff as the coordinator of Christian Education (CE) and Youth Ministries, and has written our Christmas Pageants for many years.

We rejoice as Ashley progresses through this milestone and lives into God’s call on her life. Please take this opportunity to greet and encourage Ashley, and to continue to hold her in your prayers.

Annual Thanksgiving Feast
Following Worship on **Sun., Nov. 23**, join us in the Social Hall for a turkey luncheon with all the trimmings! Please bring a side dish or dessert to share (sign up outside the East Transept on **Sun., Nov. 9 and 16**). All dishes should be labeled with your name. There is no need to bring a serving utensil.

If you are interested in volunteering with setup, serving, and/or cleanup, contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x14.

In October, five ELPC teens served at World Vision, preparing more than 800 blankets for shipment to needy individuals around the world.
Pastoral Message
The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor

The theme for this month’s letter is choices. Well, actually the theme is about church renovations, stewardship, and faith—but in the end, it is about choices. Ever since a presentation about possible ELPC building renovations was made in June to our church officers, the Renovations Committee has been diligently working with an architectural and an engineering firm to consider how any changes to our building would necessitate upgrades to our infrastructure (plumbing, electrical, ventilation systems). On one hand, we have a marvelously designed building that is neither wasteful nor inefficient in how it uses energy. On the other hand, these infrastructure systems were designed over 75 years ago for programs that fit a pre-World War II church ministry model.

The Renovations Committee remains committed to several core values: respecting the beauty of our cathedral; renovating rooms for flexible and long-term usage; making improvements that are energy-efficient and can be a model for other churches to emulate. One scenario being considered is to do improvements to the church that would allow ELPC to become LEED-certified. Our Property committee already has taken this goal to heart. Later this year, when the Staff Parking Lot is being re-surfaced, instead of simply applying a fresh layer of asphalt, the decision was made to install permeable paving stones that will allow for some absorption of rainwater. This choice has some extra costs, but as a long-term goal that reflects our core values, it is the right choice.

Early this month, we will celebrate Stewardship Sunday. Congregation members and friends will be invited to bring forward food donations (to support EECM’s Food Bank) and pledge cards for the coming year. The goals for 2015 include an increase in three areas: the monthly electronic pledges, the overall number of pledges, and the level of congregational support for our annual budget. If everyone chooses to help us reach these goals, we will again decrease our dependence on endowment resources, while maintaining our wide range of ministry programs and mission outreach. The choices involved are modest in scope, yet very important for our congregation’s financial health.

Sometimes people talk about a life of Christian faith as if it were something that simply happens—by chance, intuition, or unconscious inclination. They may say, “I simply had faith that things would all work out.” The Bible recognizes that faith relies on an internal spiritual life and a trust in God that comes more from our hearts than our heads. However, acting faithfully is always conscious and intentional in nature. When Jesus called out to Peter, James, and John to become disciples, they made a conscious choice to leave their nets and follow him.

Just like the Hebrews after Mt. Sinai, and the women and men around Jesus in ancient Palestine, people today make active choices each day to serve our Lord God. May we each, as renovators and stewards and disciples of Christ here at ELPC, make choices this month that show the world our core values of faith.
Stewardship Sunday Provides an Opportunity

It is fitting that the theme for this year’s Stewardship Campaign is one word—Opportunity. A life of faith is one that responds to the opportunities freely given to us in Christ for service, witness, prayer, and celebration. Our church strives to offer those opportunities to everyone who enters our doors or lives in our community. All this is done trusting in God, “whose power is at work in us and able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine.”

Our Stewardship Campaign has set three “Goals for 20” for the coming year. We are aiming to have 20 new pledges for 2015, 20 new monthly givers using our EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) program, and an increase of $20,000 in overall congregational support. Given the number of new members we have and the energy around our diverse church ministries, these goals can all be attained.

On Sun., Nov. 9, we ask congregation members and friends to bring forward a completed pledge envelope (previously mailed). You also can donate food items to benefit the EECM Food Bank (see page 8 for more details).

Your Stewardship pledges go a long way to help maintain our programs and building, reduce our dependence on savings, and provide new opportunities for active Christian faith and witness. Please join us on Stewardship Sunday!

Officer Nominating Committee is Looking for a Few Dedicated People

As November brings us closer to Thanksgiving, the 2015 Officer Nominating Committee (ONC) is seeking individuals who are inspired to give thanks through service towards our Church’s mission. We have several open offices in the class of 2018 to serve as an Elder on Session or as a Deacon. Serving in these offices brings you closer to the spirit of our Church.

Help us develop a slate of candidates who are dedicated to, and representative of, our congregation by thinking about the qualifications and interests of those you know and work with at ELPC. Your best suggestion may even be yourself!

Please complete a nomination form, available in the church office, or speak to an ONC member by Mon., Nov. 24.

Members of your 2015 ONC are Noel Clive, Valire Copeland, Mark DeVitt, Doris Dick, James Eng, Libby Ferda, Carol Hoehn, Elizabeth Hopkins, Elders Frances Wilson and Eric Young, and Deacon Jason Ferrante.

Candidates will be presented at ELPC’s 2015 Annual Meeting in February.
Contemporaries Class  Second Floor Parlor  
Facilitator: Mary Alice Lightle

**Nov. 2: The Problem of Discipleship**
To become a disciple is to give one’s self up to a larger cause. Discipleship seems to undermine the freedom and autonomy modern people so greatly prize. ELPC Elder Peter Murray will lead us in a discussion of questions of authority and loyalties as we continue our series, *Discipleship: The Way of Jesus*.

**Nov. 9, 16, and 23: Combined classes with Seekers, see descriptions to the right.**

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Nov. 30: Loyalty, Community, and Authority  
Dr. Ron Stone, a retired ethics professor from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, will discuss H. Richard Niebuhr’s *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture*, and Niebuhr’s call for transformation of the self and reorientation toward God.

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Journey with Scripture  Second Floor Library
Facilitator: Jan Lyle Irvin

At the edge of entering the promised land the people of Israel recognize that “it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors...out of the house of slavery.” November’s scripture readings also stand at an edge. They recall the Exodus experience and tell of Christ’s coming—companion stories in the grand arc of promise and fulfillment. Together, they illuminate the courage and work required to recognize and receive the grace of God’s reign. Come join us on the journey through reading and reflection.

**Nov. 2:** Joshua 3:7–17; Psalm 107:1–7,33–37; 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13; Matthew 23:1–12  
**Nov. 9:** Joshua 24:1–3,14–25; Psalm 78:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1–13  
**Nov. 16:** Judges 4:1–7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11; Matthew 25:14–30  
**Nov. 23:** Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15–23; Matthew 25:31–46  
**Nov. 30:** Isaiah 64:1–9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17–19; 1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Mark 13:24–37

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Seekers  Room 234
Facilitator: Gwen Puza

**Nov. 2: Learning to Walk in the Dark**
Pastor Heather will lead us as we conclude our two-part class on Barbara Brown Taylor’s book. We will explore the spiritual concepts of light and darkness, and challenge our tendency to equate good with lightness and evil with darkness. Taylor’s invites us to cultivate courage, trust in God, and see the world in a new way, where we can sense God’s presence in all things.

**Nov. 9: Update from Bolivia**
Chenoa Stock will discuss her mission work with the Bolivian Joing Hands Network, UMAVIDA, as well as the recent presidential elections and a new mining law. We also will hear about advances in the mission of UMAVIDA, as it struggles to support those affected by mining contamination.

**Nov. 16: Early Development of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania**
The Presbyterians who came together as a congregation in East Liberty were among those who came into the upper Ohio Valley from east of the mountains and beyond the Atlantic. We will consider the origins of Presbyterianism in what became ELPC in the context of the early migration. Peter Gilmore, adjunct professor at Carlow and Carnegie Mellon Universities, will lead our class.

**Nov. 23: Presbyterian Ritual and Discipline in the Western Pennsylvania Countryside**
Led by Peter Gilmore, we will look inside the calendar of everyday faith experiences to explore the rituals that gave meaning and coherence to Presbyterianism—and the surprising, inspiring, and shocking problems confronting individuals and Sessions striving for Christian unity.

**Nov. 30: Expecting the End-Times**
The lectionary readings for Advent invariably begin with words about an apocalyptic, coming Day of the Lord. These sentiments struck a chord with early Christians and several religious groups in America. Pastor Randy will explore both threads of Advent and apocalyptic thought to consider how we can best respond to this faith message today.

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Soul Food  Room 244
Facilitator: Joe Hajdu

**November: A Collection of Writings on Discernment**
We will be discussing the latter chapters of *Discernment*, by Henri Nouwen, and also selecting our next book.

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*Note: Classes begin at 9:45 am.*
Youth Ministry
Sara Hackett, Coordinator for Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Sat., Nov. 1, 8, and 22: Youth Basketball from 5–8 pm
Students in grades 9–12 are invited to play basketball in the ELPC Gym.

Sat., Nov. 8: Visit to California University of Pennsylvania
Senior-high students are invited on a college visit to California University of Pennsylvania. We will meet at ELPC at 7:45 am, depart by 8 am, and return by 2 pm. Lunch will be included. For more information, contact Anthony Williams.

club one sixteen: sharing our stories
Senior-high youth will continue exploring how their personal stories intersect with God's story. This month, we will study the story of Job and reflect on faith, resilience, and finding God in times of trial.

club life: sewing
We will learn more about sewing.

our schedule
Wednesdays, from 3:30–7:30 pm
• 3:30 pm: Gathering Time/ Homework Help/Open Gym
• 4:30 pm: Opening Worship
• 5 pm: Dinner
• 5:30 pm: Bible Study
• 6:30 pm: Gym (older youth)/ club life (younger youth)
• 7:30 pm: Dismissal

Young Adult Ministry
Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs

Fri., Nov. 7: First Friday @ Repair the World at 7 pm
Come meet new friends at Repair the World (6022 Broad St.). We will share a potluck dinner and fellowship as we learn about their organization. Please bring a vegetarian dish for 5–7 people. Then, we will serve together as we cook a meal for our neighbors. To learn more, visit WeRepair.org.

Sun., Nov. 9: YAM Sunday Class at 9:45 am, in Pastor’s Conference Room
Doesn’t the Bible call homosexuality an “abomination” and mandate death? Our fall theme on Scriptures that challenge us as Christians continues as Pastor Heather discusses the so-called Clobber Texts that have been used against LGBTQ people. Café Justo will be served and childcare will be available in the nursery.

Mon., Nov. 17: Adoption Event at 6 pm, in the Game Room
During National Adoption Month, we will learn and experience as we host kids from TRAC (Three Rivers Adoption Council) at ELPC for some fun events and then have a discussion about adoption with TRAC leadership. Please RSVP with Wil by Sat., Nov. 1, if you are attending so that we can plan accordingly.

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.

Advent Devotionals Now Available
The ELPC Christian Education (CE) Committee is offering devotionals as our gift to you this Advent season. This time before Christmas often becomes a season of busyness for families. Our prayer is that these devotions help you and your family create the space in your lives to focus on the good news of Christ’s birth, and that you might be nurtured spiritually throughout Advent.

Three booklets are available on the Second Floor CE Table. Each is geared toward persons of different ages, so select the devotional booklet that best serves you and your family.

Guess Who’s Coming for Christmas is an Advent devotional booklet and chain activity for children and their families. Each day, kids are introduced to characters from the Old and New Testaments that help tell the story of Jesus’ birth. Then, children can add a corresponding link in the Advent chain to count the days to Christmas.

Joy in Jesus is a devotional booklet that invites teens and adults to reflect on the joy we have in Jesus because of the special gift of His birth. Our lives can be demanding and difficult. This booklet offers scripture, reflection, and prayer to encourage us to center on the joy that is ours in Christ.

A Quiet Chamber Kept for Thee is a booklet of prayers for each day of Advent, written to take less than two minutes of your time. This devotion offers you a few moments of quiet each day that you might spend with Christ, and reflect on the peace, comfort and wonder we anticipate at His birth.
Feeling Crafty?
Our Sewing, Knitting, and Toy Makers Groups are looking for new members to share in fellowship and use their talents to meet the needs of our local and global communities. Beginners are welcome. For more information, call Diane Jackson at 412.441.6021.

- **Sewing Group** meets on the third Monday of each month. Join us on **Mon., Nov. 17**, from 4:30–6:30 pm, in the Sewing Room.
- **Knitting Group** meets on the first Tuesday of each month. Join us on **Tues., Nov. 4**, from 1–3 pm, in Room 244.
- **Toy Makers Group** is meeting on **Wed., Nov. 5** and **19**, from 9 am–12 pm, in the Sewing Room.

Commission in Honor of the Rev. Dr. Szeremany
Composer Alfred Fedak has been commissioned to compose a new arrangement of **Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee** for organ, choir, and congregation in honor of the Rev. Dr. J. Richard Szeremany, ELPC’s music director emeritus. The new piece will be premiered during the 11 am, Sanctuary Worship service on **Sun., Nov. 23**.

Presbyterian Women
*Mary Alice Lightle, Moderator*

**Tues., Nov. 4 | Mon., Nov. 10: Reconciling Paul**
Join us at 10 am, on the first Tuesday of the month or 7 pm, on the second Monday of the month in the Second Floor Parlor as we continue our study of 2 Corinthians. Our lesson, **Covenants and God’s Enduring Faithfulness**, is based on 2 Corinthians 3:1–4:6. A potluck lunch follows the Tuesday morning study. All are welcome!

Thank Offering to be Received on Sun., Nov. 23
On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, **Sun., Nov. 23**, we will honor the women of ELPC by receiving the Thank Offering of Presbyterian Women.
For more than 120 years, the Thank Offering has supported programs that relieve pain, provide clean water, alleviate homelessness, provide educational opportunities and lift up the lives of women and children throughout the world.

Last year, ELPC members and friends contributed approximately **$2,400**, which helped fund **36 projects** around the world. Thank you!

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

**Fast for Hunger**
Our November Fast for Hunger begins the evening of **Fri., Oct. 31**, and concludes with the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper on **Sun., Nov. 2**. Materials are available on the SLC Bulletin Board.

**Thursdays: Mindfulness Meditation** from **7–8:30 pm**, in the Second Floor Library
Join Susan Spangler to learn this ancient form of prayer each Thursday through Nov. 27. Beginners are welcome!

**Sat., Dec. 6: Advent Day of Healing** from **9 am–4 pm**
Mark your calendars for an Advent Day of Healing: **Madonnas, Meditation, and Mandalas**. Step away from the noise and busyness of this hectic season and enter into the spirit of the incarnation. Check the SLC Bulletin Board for registration forms and additional information.

Day-Long Retreat with Martin Laird
Join us from 8:30 am–4 pm, on **Sat., Nov. 15**, to experience a retreat with Martin Laird, an author and contemporary scholar on Christian Contemplative Practice. Visit the SLC webpage or Bulletin Board for more information and registration forms.
Join us for a Work Day at Valley View

Over the years, ELPC and Valley View Presbyterian Church, in Garfield, have joined together to serve God’s people in many activities. We’ve deepened our relationship as brothers and sisters in Christ by meeting the needs of our communities through participation in food, housing, and youth service projects.

On Sat., Nov. 22, we have an opportunity to support the Valley View congregation by assisting them with much-needed maintenance and repair at their church. Projects include interior wall repair and painting, minor excavation work to eliminate flooding in the kitchen, removal and disposal of old roofing tiles and cinder blocks, and other small projects. There are jobs for those with considerable repair/rehab experience and for those with just a willing heart and two hands!

We at ELPC are blessed by our physical structure. As we enter this season of Thanksgiving, let us be of service to our neighbors so that the the Valley View congregation may share the same blessing. For more information, contact Michele Bosser at michele2285@gmail.com or 412.303.9243.

LGBTQ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs

To learn more about, or to get involved with, ELPC’s LGBTQ Ministry, contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x14.

All are welcome to join us for our next spiritual gathering on Sat., Nov. 15, and our business meeting at 12:30 pm, on Sat., Nov. 30.

God created you. God loves you.
Be yourself.

Note to Self: Tis the Season…to Volunteer.

by Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs

I receive many offers from people inside and outside of our church, who are interested in serving during the holiday season. This time of celebration seems to stir a sense of care for our fellow brothers and sisters. This is a good thing, and we need charitable hands and hearts during this season.

Remember though, we also need help throughout the year. If we had half of this interest in March, August, and October, we would easily meet our volunteer obligations and demands. Consider responding to a request that you read about in the Bulletin or on the iSERVE Bulletin Board. Items are frequently updated so you know where we need help from our church family.

Please consider writing a note to yourself in your personal calendar that you set aside a couple hours to serve in other months outside wintertime. I guarantee that the need will be there and that it will be appreciated! Thank you in advance.

For more information and to read about other service opportunities, please visit CathedralOfHope.org/programs/iSERVE.

Session News

At the recent Session meetings:

• A group of 18 new members and friends were added to the church roll, and 4 baptisms (3 adult, 1 infant) were approved.

• Updates were given by the Nominating and Stewardship Committees, with the latter outlining its goals for this fall’s Stewardship Campaign.

• The Renovations Committee reported on the progress made by the architectural and engineering firms that are working with our church on environmentally friendly renovations. A proposal is expected at the November Session meeting.

ELPC People

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

Good News

• Xyla Blackshear, daughter of Chanteera Blackshear, was baptized on Aug. 22.

• Dayna Shelkey and McKay Bray were married on Oct. 4.

• Pamela Napier and Louis Barnes were married on Oct. 11.

• ELPC member Taylor Lewand was awarded an academic scholarship by Presbyterian Women and the Youth and Young Adult Committee.

• ELPC member Jordan Pollard was awarded a Robert Coleman/Dr. Leroy Patrick scholarship. The annual award is given to nine area undergraduates and is financed by the Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus and supporters of Pittsburgh Presbytery.

Prayers

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

• Eric McCarty’s mother; and

• Eric Vinsel’s grandfather.
As a diverse community of believers, we strive to follow God—the Creator who calls us, Jesus who teaches us, and the Spirit who empowers us. We show God’s unconditional love by providing a refuge for spiritual growth, ardently pursuing justice, and extending Christ’s radical hospitality to all.”

Thanksgiving Food Drive
Each year, the ELPC Poverty and Christian Education Committees sponsor a Thanksgiving Food Drive. Grocery bags and the list of requested food items will be available during both morning worship services on Sun., Oct. 26 and Nov 2.

Prayerfully consider taking a bag and returning it Stewardship Sunday, Nov. 9. During the 11 am service, we will bring these bags forward as a special offering, and dedicate them to God’s use. The EECM Food Pantry will distribute the food to needy families.

Chili Dinner and Square Dance
Folks of all ages are invited to a Chili Dinner and Square Dance event at ELPC from 5–8 pm, on Sat., Nov. 8. Chili will be provided, but please bring a salad, side, or dessert to share. RSVP on the ELPC Facebook page or the sign-up sheet on the Second Floor CE Bulletin Board to let us know you are coming and what food item you can bring. Feel free to dress the part, and to bring a neighbor or a friend!

No dancing experience is necessary as Barb MacDonald, from the Western Pennsylvania Square and Round Dance Federation, will teach us all we need to know. Seating will be available for folks who might not want to dance, but want to be part of the fun.

Share the Warmth this Winter
ELPC is collecting coats, hats, scarves and gloves for EECM to distribute to those in need for winter. Please share the warmth, by donating new and gently used clean coats for men, women, and children of all ages and sizes.

Donations may be put in the church’s front office on or before Sun., Nov. 9.

Steinway Piano Dedication
The Cathedral Concerts’ season continues as we dedicate the newly refurbished Steinway Piano in the Chapel at 5 pm, on Sat., Nov. 22.

Hear performances by the Rev. Dr. Randy Bush, Gabriel D’Abruzzo, and Betty Rieley. The concert is free, but a freewill offering will be received.

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