Invite Friends To Explore Our Faith Family

September is a great time to encourage your friends and neighbors to visit ELPC and consider making our church part of their faith journey. So often, once people explore our beautiful building, meet our congregation members, and learn about our diverse mission, educational, and spiritual life offerings, they decide to become a friend or member of our church.

Visitors’ Sunday and the Church Life Sampler on Sun., Sept. 16, provide both a time of welcome for guests and an opportunity in the Social Hall to learn about ELPC’s wide array of programs.

The Church Picnic on Sun., Sept. 23, is a wonderful time of food and fellowship—allowing people to get better acquainted with our church friends and members who make ELPC so special. The Christian Education Committee will provide fried chicken, hot dogs, and potato salad. We ask that those who attend bring a side dish or salad to share, so that there is enough food for everyone. Activities will be available for persons of all ages once everyone has been served.

Give some thought to inviting someone for these events, so that the good word and good work of ELPC can continue to grow to the glory of God!

Alex McNeill to Visit ELPC

We are pleased to welcome Alex Patchin McNeill as our guest preacher at our Journey worship service on Sun., Sept. 23, 8:45 am. He also will lead our Young Adult Church School class, 9:45 am, in Room 213, as we examine what it looks like to have a fully inclusive church that practices the radical hospitality of Christ.

Alex has served as the executive director of More Light Presbyterians since 2013, and has long been a strong advocate for inclusion of LGBTQ people and marriage equality. As an openly transgender man, Alex holds a Master of Divinity from Harvard and is a candidate for ordination in the PC(USA).

Come support Alex and his vibrant ministry of public witness and generous Christian hospitality.

Rally Day is Here

On Rally Day, Sun., Sept. 9, we will resume our regular Sunday schedule with Journey worship at 8:45 am, Church School at 9:45 am, and Sanctuary worship at 11 am. The Christian Education Committee will host breakfast to welcome everyone back to Church School at 9:30 am. Grab a bite to eat and greet friends in the Fellowship Room on the first floor before heading to class. See page 4 for class details.

Sunday Services

*Celebration of the Lord’s Supper
Summer Worship • 10 am
Sept. 2* Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Journey Worship • 8:45 am
Theme: What’s Next
Sept. 9 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
Sept. 16 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Sept. 23 Alex McNeill
Sept. 30 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sanctuary Worship • 11 am
Sept. 9 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
Sept. 16 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Sept. 23 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
Sept. 30 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Labyrinth Prayer Walk
Mondays • 7 am–1 pm
Wednesdays • 9 am–9 pm

Taizé Prayer Service
Wednesdays • 7 pm
Live stream available at ELPC.church
Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan
Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor

Maybe it’s a sign of getting older, of having strong feelings of nostalgia. Maybe it’s a reaction to the breakneck pace of our internet age and Twitter-intoxicated world. For whatever reason, I find myself looking back at thinkers from the recent past in order to navigate the challenges we face today. For example, I read a review of essays from the World War II-era political scientist Hannah Arendt. As a Jewish thinker and activist, she fled Germany in 1933, landing first in France and later in the United States, where she became a citizen in 1951 and scholar until her death in 1975. She knew firsthand about totalitarian states and tyrants. I find that her words offer a compelling message for us today.

Arendt said this about the danger of politicians who lie: “If everyone always lies to you, the consequence is not that you believe the lies, but that no one believes anything at all...A lying government leaves people not only dispossessed of their ability to act, but also of their capacity to think and to judge. And with such a people, you can then do whatever you please.” Arendt reminds us that far worse than being misguided by a lie is when a series of lies causes you to stop trusting everything you hear. Once that happens, you have nowhere to stand except upon a platform of self-interest; and if you are all that matters in this world, your judgment is fatally impaired and tyrants can rule over us as they see fit.

The chorus of voices that supports this political theory of self-interest shouts out to us: Don’t trust the government (politicians are all bad); don’t try to change things (the problems are too big); don’t risk yourself for the sake of others (let “them” take care of themselves). But the scriptures I’ve read and cherished offer an entirely different message. By entering into a covenant of faith with God, we are necessarily moving beyond “self-interest” and focusing on the “common good” (or in biblical terms, the Kingdom of God). This is the opposite of disbelieving those in authority; rather it involves choosing to stay in relationship with others at all costs. That is why Jesus spoke of taking on his yoke and his burden. That is why the Beatitudes speak of how the poor and meek are blessed, and that we are to forgive others not seven times, but seventy-seven times. That is why, by faith, we are no longer captives of this world. However as the prophet Zechariah reminds us, we are actually “prisoners of hope.” And from that form of idealistic captivity of faith, by God’s grace we shall never be set free.

Faith is the opposite of escapism. It is digging in, defending truth in a culture of lies, accepting yokes for the common good and the Kingdom of God instead of the false freedom of individualism and self-interest. And why is this important? Again, Hannah Arendt offers words of guidance: “If we ever lose our ability to wonder and ask unanswerable questions, we will also lose the faculty of asking the answerable questions upon which every civilization is founded.” The one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life would never have us lose the ability to formulate idealistic, hopeful, unanswerable questions about this life, knowing that by grace it is precisely this faithful, covenantal work that helps us approximate the good news summarized in the Lord’s Prayer: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Randy Bush
Retirement of Pam Kimmel
The title of “ELPC Business Administrator” sounds straightforward, but in practice, this staff position involves a wide array of tasks. It includes managing the staff and scheduling of rooms throughout our building. It involves financial oversight and budget work, updating insurance and personnel records, and coordinating a host of details for everything from funeral receptions to guest concert performances.

For more than 23 years, Pam Kimmel has effectively, gracefully, and faithfully navigated the work associated with being our church’s business administrator. Later this year, she will transition into a season of formal retirement—although she insists she will maintain her spot in our church choir.

We anticipate hosting a post-worship reception for Pam in November, to thank her for her incredible service over the years, but please keep her in your prayers as she completes her time on staff in the coming weeks.

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

Facing Systemic Racism Series: Uncovering Your Racial Autobiography
Join us on Sat., Sept. 22, 5:30 pm, as we continue our series on systemic racism in our society and how it impacts our lives. The Rev. Dr. John C. Welch, Dean of Students at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, will lead us as we explore our own racial autobiography.

We will share a potluck meal in the Social Hall at 5:30 pm. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share if you are able. The program runs from 6–8 pm. Childcare is available with a reservation by leaving a message at 412.441.3800 x140.

Unfolding Stories from Carlisle Indian School
This year marks the 100th anniversary of the closing of our nation’s first Indian Boarding School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. These residential facilities were first established under Christian missionaries with the intent to “civilize” and “Christianize” indigenous children, sometimes removing them forcibly from their parents’ homes. An oft repeated phrase was “Kill the Indian to spare the child.”

In observance of this infamous point in U.S. history, the Carlisle Historical Society and Dickinson College are sponsoring a Centennial Commemoration Conference from Thurs.–Sun., Oct. 4–7, to share the history of the school and provide an opportunity to hear the descendant narratives and post-boarding school experiences of those impacted by this racist chapter in our history.

The conference is free, but participants are responsible for transportation, lodging, and meals. Members of the ELPC Justice Committee will attend this important event and welcome others to join them. There are several hotels offering a discounted conference rate. The Justice Committee will arrange for car pooling to the Comfort Inn Suites for those who are interested.

If you are interested in attending the conference, please contact Michele Bossers by Sun., Sept. 9, at michele2285@gmail.com or 412.303.9243. For more information, visit tiny.cc/Carlisle-Commemoration.

Support Farms that Protect Natural Resources
The ELPC Justice Committee suggests helping the environment by supporting more sustainable farming systems that protect our natural resources.

Organic farms can provide some environmental benefits compared to conventional agriculture—especially in terms of animal diversity, soil health, and water conservation. These farms manage soil fertility and nutrients through cultivation practices like crop rotations and cover crops, which return nutrients back to the soil and help prevent pests.

In addition, organic livestock operations are required to provide animals with outdoor space, and restrict the use of unnecessary antibiotics. Grass-fed beef also can further improve soil health by offsetting some of their greenhouse gas emissions by restoring carbon-rich grassland soils.

Community-Supported Agriculture
The Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) model allows you to directly support farmers who grow food ethically and organically. To increase choice, some CSAs offer flexible produce selections. Test them in the Farmers’ Markets now, and consider signing up for next year! Visit findmyCSAfarm.com/pittsburgh to learn more.

Surprising Fact
It turns out that “eating locally”—while good for your community—isn’t a big climate change solution. Eating seasonally appropriate and local food is still a great way to eat healthier and support farmers in your region, but it turns out “food miles” are not a major factor in climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions.
Contemporaries  Harambe Room
Facilitator: Contemporaries Steering Committee
Sept. 9: Welcome Back and Introduction
Presbyterians recognize that God calls us to explore how the Christian faith can be more fully known and expressed. On our journey this year, our minds will be challenged by new ideas and our emotions stirred to gratitude; calls for action can lead us in new directions.

Sept. 16: Theology for Presbyterians: The Bible
Just because Presbyterians don’t always interpret the Bible literally, doesn’t mean we don’t take it seriously! We will consider the Bible as the Word of God.

Sept. 23: Theology for Presbyterians: God
We worship a good and great Triune God who is involved in the world from creation to today. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

Sept. 30: Theology for Presbyterians: Jesus Christ
We confess Jesus as the “Christ” and “the Word made flesh”—one person with two natures: divine and human. How does the cross embody our belief and empower us to live faithfully?

Journey with Scripture  Second Floor Library
Facilitators: Lora Bethea and Jan Lyle Irvin
“Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all”—Mark 9:35. This fall’s readings reach into the wisdom tradition of scripture—its affirmation of “lived experience” as opposed to it being diminished by “religious belief.” Ultimately, scripture arcs to the incomprehensible wisdom of life lived in, and attached to, Jesus Christ. Jesus affirms our lived experience, yet in him, the world’s wisdom gets turned upside down. Strangely, we gain unimagined abundant life serving this world.

Sept. 9: Proverbs 22:1–2, 8–9, 22–23; Psalm 125; James 2:1–17; Mark 7:24–37
Sept. 16: Proverbs 1:20–33; Psalm 19; James 3:1–2; Mark 8:27–31
Sept. 23: Proverbs 31:10–31; Psalm 1; James 3:13–4:3–8a; Mark 9:30–37
Sept. 30: Esther 7:1–10; 9:20–22; Psalm 124; James 5:13–20; Mark 9:38–50

Seekers  Garth Overlook Room
Facilitator: Gwen Puza
Sept. 9: International Volunteer Experiences
Gwen Puza will talk about her experience working at a school for children in Cambodia as part of an international volunteer program. This program has various types of opportunities in many counties for anyone who is interested.

Sept. 16: Yom Kippur: Release, Repentance, Recommitment
Rabbi Doris Dyen will be with us to discuss the penitential prayers and special activities of the holiest day in the Jewish year, Yom Kippur (also known as the Day of Atonement). During this 25-hour period, all normal activities stop, except those necessary to sustain life. Individually and collectively, Jews spend these hours in communal prayer and contemplation—reaching inward to face themselves honestly and outward to affirm their intention of making right what has gone wrong in their lives.

Sept. 23: Journalism, Political Influence, and Profit
Neil Cosgrove, a retired professor from Slippery Rock University, will review recent events that have affected print journalism in our region. We will discuss how journalists go about doing their jobs, their professional goals, and the distinction between news and editorial writing. We also will explore the ways in which these elements are affected by how journalism is financed and consumed.

Sept. 30: The poet Rumi: Selections and Islamic Insights
Aliya Khan from the Monroeville (Islamic) Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh will lead us as we examine 2–3 poems by Jalaluddin Rumi—the great 13th century mystic poet of Islam—and trace his inspiration from the Quran.

Soul Food  Good Samaritan Room
Facilitator: Rev. Joe Hajdu
Sept. 9: Gathering and Preview Session
Sept. 16, 23, and 30: Book Discussion
We will begin discussing Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality, by David Benner. New participants are welcome and books can be ordered quickly.

Children and Youth
Young Children's Ministry/Infants–Age 2  Nursery
Pre-school/Ages 3–5  Room 110 B
Kindergarten–Grade 1  Room 206
Grades 2–3  Room 205
Grades 4–5  Room 211
Middle School (grades 6–8)  Room 207
Senior High (grades 9–12)  Room 217
# Explore Our Children and Youth Ministries

As an intergenerational faith family, ELPC offers a variety of programs for children and youth. Here’s an overview of our ministries, which take place weekly and monthly throughout our program year (September–May). We also offer seasonal programs. If you have questions about our ministries for children or youth, please call Pastor Heather at 412.441.3800 x121 or Sara Hackett at 412.673.2926.

To receive our monthly Youth Calendar (by mail or electronically) listing all the events for youth in grades 4–12, contact Sara Hackett.

## Nursery

Our Nursery is available for infants–age 2, and is open on Sundays, 8:30 am–12:30 pm, and Wednesdays, 6–8:15 pm. Our Nursery is staffed by three childcare providers who offer care, developmentally appropriate play, and a simple faith lesson on Sundays. Children may arrive at any time. (Note: If children turn 3 after Sept. 30, they remain in the nursery until the start of the next school year.)

## Church School

We offer Church School classes for people of all ages on Sundays, 9:45–10:45 am. Children and youth attend classes according to their age (preschool–grade 12) and are taught by the same team of teachers every week. For details on curriculum and class location, visit tiny.cc/elpc-youth-ce.

## Extended Session

We offer Extended Session each Sunday for infants and children up to grade 1, following Children’s Time during Sanctuary worship. For those who might grow restless during the sermon, this time provides an opportunity for children to continue their worship in a more hands-on manner with story, craft, and a snack.

## Doing Good Together

DG2 is an interfaith youth service partnership for students in grades 4–12, led by ELPC and Rodef Shalom congregation in Shadyside. Youth serve alongside one another each month, learning how to make a positive impact in our community with people of other faith traditions.

## Tween Events

Students in grades 4–6 are welcome to attend monthly events that are designed to nurture community and create fun opportunities for youth who have one foot in the “kid” world and one foot in the “teen” world.

## Youth Events

Students in grades 6–12 are invited to monthly events—ranging from service projects to fellowship to retreats. Some events are age-specific, such as retreats.

## Food 4 Thought

We offer a one-on-one mentoring program for students in grades 6–8 on Thursdays, 4:30–6:30 pm (beginning Thurs., Oct. 4). This learning support and enrichment program reinforces skills that are known to be necessary for success in and out of school through sharing meals, cooking together, doing homework, and enjoying a variety of fun activities. Pre-registration is required.

## Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Education and Youth Ministry

**Tween Night: Ice Cream Social**

Fri., Sept. 21 | 6–8 pm

Tweens in grades 4–6 are getting together to bake pizza, make ice cream, and play games in the Gym. Friends are welcome!

**Training for Youth Worship Leaders**

Sun., Sept. 23 | 10:15–10:45 am

Any youth in grades 4–12 who is interested in serving as an acolyte, crucifer, or usher during Sanctuary worship may attend this training session in the Sanctuary.

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**Child Safety is a Priority**

More than eight years ago, ELPC adopted policies to keep kids safe while they are in our care. While there are many specifics outlined in these policies, here are a few ways that families can partner with our staff to keep all kids safe.

1. **Supervision:** Every child and youth must be supervised at all times, either by their parent/guardian or by someone from ELPC who has completed our clearance and training process. This means that children and youth cannot be unattended in any room while parents are attending other events.

2. **Transitions:** Only youth in grade 6 or older may transition through hallways or go to the restroom unaccompanied. Children in grade 5 or younger must always be accompanied by a parent/guardian to classrooms, programs, or restrooms.

3. **Enrollment Form:** An enrollment form must be completed for every student participating in any ELPC programs, which includes information on allergies, dismissal, emergency contacts, etc. Only one form needs to be completed for each student.
Presbyterian Women

Sherry Anderson, Moderator

Bible Study | God’s Promise: I am with You
Tues., Sept. 4 10 am | Mon., Sept. 10 7 pm

The theme for our Bible study this year is God’s Promise: I am with You. Study guides will be available on Sun., Sept. 2, following Sanctuary worship.

This year, we will have two groups. The first group will typically meet on the first Monday of each month at 7 pm, and will focus on the Bible study. The second group will meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 10 am. In addition to Bible study, this group will explore mission work, set aside time for “women-ship,” discuss the business of the group, and enjoy a potluck lunch. Please bring your own place setting and a side or salad to share.

Our first lesson will be titled “God with us wherever we are.” We will meet in the Second Floor Parlor.

Is Presbyterian Women for Me?

Do you want to explore our faith in the context of the Bible and the hearts and minds of other women? Do you appreciate the “women-ship” of time spent with women of faith as we examine our beliefs and the key writings of our faith tradition? Do you yearn for time spent in prayer and conversation with women of faith? Do you enjoy exploring and supporting mission efforts near and far?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then Presbyterian Women (PW) may be the place for you. Open to women of all ages, PW seeks to be a resource for shared time, challenging Bible study, and mission efforts at many levels.

Hope Academy of Music and the Arts

Linda Addlespurger, Director

Hope Academy’s Fall Term Set to Begin

Hope Academy’s fall term of dance, theater, and music classes, as well as private lessons, begins on Sat., Sept. 22. There are two additional Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre dance classes, a new Pre-Twinkle Violin and Cello program for children ages 4–7, and a Suzuki Early Childhood Baby and Toddler music class for children ages birth–3 with a parent or guardian. Plus, West African dance and drumming for children ages 10–15 with Balafon West African Dance Ensemble.

For more information about registration, visit HopeAcademyArts.com or call Karly Threets at 412.441.3800 x117.
Help Wanted: Mentors and Cooks

by Wil Forrest, Coordinator of Young Adult and Outreach Programs

Want to impact a young person’s life in a substantial and meaningful way? Talk with Wil Forrest about serving as a mentor or as a meal team member for ELPC’s Food 4 Thought program, which begins on Thurs., Oct. 4. To learn more about the program, visit ELPC.church/children-and-youth/food-thought.

Read about other service opportunities at ELPC and becoming a member of the weSERVE list at ELPC.church/programs/iSERVE.

Save the Date: Cathedral Rummage Sale

ELPC will host a Cathedral Rummage Sale on Sat., Nov. 3, 9 am–2 pm. Volunteers are needed, but we are not accepting donations at this time. Details to come.

Feeling Crafty?

New helpers of all skill levels are always welcomed. Questions? Contact Diane Jackson at 412.441.6021 or dnjcks@verizon.net.

- The Knitting Group will meet on Tues., Sept. 4, 1–3 pm.
- The Sewing Group will meet on Mon., Sept. 17, 2:30–6 pm.

Congratulations to Our Graduates

Join us in congratulating those in our faith family who celebrated their graduation this year.

- Annie Booth, who graduated from Taylor Allderdice High School
- Lynne Irvin, who graduated from Winchester Thurston School
- Shaundale Saunders, who graduated from Hill House Passport Academy Charter School
- Isaiah Wilson, who graduated from Central Catholic High School
- Taylor Lewand, who graduated from Robert Morris University with a bachelor’s degree in business administration
- Lydia Massey, who graduated from the University of Vermont with a bachelor’s degree in public communication
- Madeline Massey, who graduated from Xavier University with a bachelor’s degree in sports management and minor in gender and diversity
- Ben Lawrence, who graduated from the Peabody College at Vanderbilt University with a master’s degree in secondary education
- Paul Steidl, who graduated from Georgia Tech with a master’s degree in architecture and urban planning

In August, our Senior High Mission Trip Team served those in need with the West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps in Hampden, West Virginia. The group built a wooden ramp and deck as part of their work.
“...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 Closure
ELPC will be closed on Labor Day, Mon., Sept. 3.

Tour Our Beautiful Cathedral
Throughout the year, ELPC offers a variety of tours for members, friends, and visitors following worship on Sundays. The tours are designed to provide panoramic views from the top of our landmark tower, showcase the architecture of our Gothic Sanctuary and Romanesque Chapel, highlight the hidden stories in our stained glass, and explore our cavernous basement with giant boilers that heat the building and blowers that feed air to more than 7,000 organ pipes.

This month, we’ll climb the heights of our central tower on Sun., Sept. 9, and learn about intricate design details—large and small—in our Sanctuary and Chapel on Sun., Sept. 30.

Join the tours at the Highland Ave. entrance following Sanctuary worship.

Explore Our LGBTQ Ministry
All LGBTQ folks and allies are welcome to our monthly Spiritual Gathering on Sun., Sept. 23, following our Church Picnic. To learn more about our diverse LGBTQ Ministry or to get involved, please contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x114.

God created you. God loves you. Be yourself.