Enjoy Breakfast on Winter Rally Day
As a reminder, there will be no Church School classes on Sun., Dec. 5. Classes for people of all ages will resume on Winter Rally Day, Sun., Jan. 12, 9:45 am. The Christian Education Committee invites you to a continental breakfast in the Fellowship Room on the first floor, beginning at 9:30 am. Please bring holiday breads and fruits to share (ready to serve). Come and grab a bite to eat on your way to class. Class details and locations are listed on page 4.

Join Our New Parenting Circle
Anyone involved in parenting (singles, couples, adoptive parents, step-parents, grandparents, guardians, mentors, etc.) are welcome to join us in the Harambe Room on Sundays during the Church School hour. Gathering time starts at 9:45 am, but our formal discussion won’t start until 10 am, so that families have time to drop off their children at their classes. We share experiences, resources, prayer, and scripture as we explore how our faith builds and nourishes our family lives, as well as nurtures our parent/child relationships. Join us as we learn from one another ways to foster closer family relationships in the context of creating active faith communities.

In the Refuge of One Another Retreat
All are invited to our In the Refuge of One Another meditation retreat, taking place Fri.–Sun., Feb. 28–March 1, at the Kearns Spirituality Center. The retreat will be led by Susan Spangler and is informed by the teachings of James Finley and Thomas Merton. Join our faith family as we enter into spiritual retreat and engage in meditative and contemplative practices and teachings that bring to life the complementary intersection of Christianity and Buddhism as faithful paths to God. Beginners welcome!

The cost is $160, which includes meditation instruction, two room nights, dinner on Friday, three meals on Saturday, and brunch on Sunday. Registration forms are available at ELPC.church and throughout our church.
Pastoral Message
The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor

Welcome to the year 2020! We picture the old year as a tired, long-bearded figure shuffling off into the distance and the incoming year as a sash-draped baby energetically stepping onto the stage of life. How are you feeling about the New Year?

I almost hesitate to ask that question, given the national and international news happening around us: Washington torn asunder with impeachment hearings. America split into red & blue states overlaid with impending primary Presidential election contests. Environmental concerns, migration and refugee issues, and the unavoidable fact that a new year fundamentally means we’re all a year older. Even the small articles in the newspaper furrow our brows and cause us to shake our heads in disbelief. For example, the county in the United States with the highest likelihood of having your personal income tax returns audited happens to be Humphreys County, Mississippi—where the median annual income is only $26,000. Because of the poverty of this county and its reliance on federal assistance, you are more than 50% likelier to be audited there than if you live in Loudoun County, Virginia, where the median income is $130,000 (the highest in the country). Something seems profoundly unjust and unfaithful in this treatment of our poorest fellow citizens.

While there is much that rightly causes us to fret and worry, I hope you are able to hold onto some of the anticipation and joy that comes with a New Year’s fresh beginning. Think of your journey into 2020 as a Faith Pilgrimage. Imagine turning over the calendar to January as the marker for the initial steps in a new chapter of your faith life.

Timothy Egan recently completed a pilgrimage that travels from the oldest English-speaking church in the world to the capital city of Rome, Italy. Egan started at a small stone and brick church in Canterbury, England, where a plaque outside the entrance could well be our motto for a 2020 pilgrimage. It said, “We do not have all the answers. We are on a spiritual journey.” As Egan traveled across Europe, he visited locations long associated with pilgrims of ages past and found himself opening up to this universal human quest to connect with God as we travel our various life paths. His busy, modern, Western mind found moments to be still, to slow down and reflect on the wonder that is part of the adventure of each waking day. He took to heart instruction from Pope Francis, who challenged pilgrims (both Catholic and Presbyterian) to trust that God is near every step of our journey. Pope Francis would have us consider these basic questions: “Do you allow yourself to be amazed today? Do you let yourself be surprised?”

In a few weeks I will begin my pilgrimage-sabbatical journey in Spain, resting and reading and considering Francis’ questions. I invite you also to see the New Year as an opportunity for fresh insights about the God who amazes us and the Savior/Holy Spirit who loves to surprise us as we trust in the Lord and journey by faith toward the future. See you soon!

Randy Bush
Mission Matters

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

OHM: Thank You and 2020 Service Opportunities

Thanks to all who served with Open Hand Ministries (OHM) in 2019. Whether you helped financially, participated at a workday, attended the Racial Wealth Gap workshop, provided a meal for or served at an OHM Circles dinner, or ran or supported the OHM Marathon team...thank you!

OHM promotes equitable redevelopment and social justice in the East End by building a diverse community focused on financial wellness, equity creation, and home ownership. If you would like to help with OHM, you can reach out to Henry Petrilli at hlp615@gmail.com, Doris Dick at dadick629@gmail.com, Frank Bauerle at frbauerle@yahoo.com, or Emily Rosenthal at ejr116@gmail.com. There are many events scheduled for 2020. Mark your calendars with these opportunities to serve. Learn more at OpenHandPgh.org.

- Sat., Feb. 1  Inter-generational workday
- Tues., Feb. 4  OHM Circles Dinner
- Sat., May 2  Pittsburgh Marathon prep
- Sun., May 3  OHM Pittsburgh Marathon
- Tues., May 5  OHM Circles Dinner
- Sat., Aug. 1  Inter-generational workday
- Tues., Aug. 4  OHM Circles Dinner
- Tues., Nov. 2  OHM Circles Dinner
- Sat., Nov. 7  Inter-generational workday

Getting Fit for Mission: Join the OHM Marathon Team

Over the past few years, members of our faith family ran in the Pittsburgh Marathon to support OHM’s work. Last year, ELPC’s Towering Lights relay team raised more than $1,400! This year, OHM is again an official charity of the Pittsburgh Marathon, which will be on Sun., May 3, and ELPC is hoping to participate. Registration is free for those who raise the minimum amounts. Contact Emily Rosenthal at ejr116@gmail.com or Frank Bauerle at frbauerle@yahoo.com or 817.705.6856 if you are interested in being a team captain, running the 5K, half- or full-marathon, or relay team. We can encourage and inspire each other!

Environmental Tip from the Justice Committee

“Fast fashion” has dramatically decreased the time between the introduction of new styles of clothing and their appearance in the market. That has made it possible for designers to sell—and consumers to buy—ever-changing wardrobes. The number of new garments bought each year by Americans has tripled since the 1960s, and the time that clothes are kept by consumers has reduced by half.

Although various organizations collect used apparel, only about 10% of donated clothing actually ends up in the secondhand market. (Business Insider, March 22, 2018). The U.S. alone sends about 21 billion pounds of textile waste (much of it clothes) to landfills every year.

According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), fashion production makes up 10% of humanity’s carbon emissions, dries up water sources, and pollutes rivers and streams. The dyes used in clothing production in countries without environmental protections are often dumped directly into streams and rivers. Washing clothes containing polyester, a plastic contained in approximately 60% of apparel, releases tiny particles of plastic into the water supply, and oceans.

Some manufacturers have pledged to adopt sustainable practices to produce clothing. Consumers also can buy, trade, and donate used clothing, and keep new purchases longer. National awareness on the scope of the problem may result in new, innovative solutions in the future.

Being a Matthew 25 Congregation | Part 2

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”—Matthew 25:40

The first identifying marker of a Matthew 25 congregation is Building Congregational Vitality. The vitality of a congregation or worshiping community is not based on the number of members, number of ministry programs, size of financial gifts, or other statistics. A church community’s vitality is the spiritual strength and capacity for purposeful mission, and is evident when a church’s structural systems, finances, and discipleship practices are aligned in such a way that the community is actively engaged in the mission of God in their local community and the world.

Worshiping communities experience congregational vitality when they find themselves following Jesus into places of injustice and struggle bearing light and hope, demonstrating love and mercy, and working faithfully for justice and peace. Efforts are sustained by personal and congregational patterns and practices of prayer and worship, learning and reflection.

Next, we’ll explore the seven marks that help determine a church’s level of vitality.
Contemporaries  McKelvy Room  
Facilitator: Carolyn Russ, Steering Committee Chair  
Jan. 12: Become a Hospice Volunteer  
If you are looking for an opportunity to grow personally and spiritually, and to touch the lives of your neighbors and community, please consider joining the exceptional team of hospice volunteers at Healthcare at Home. A hospice volunteer is present in many different ways for a patient and their family, but above all, being a hospice volunteer will forever change your life and your outlook on life. The presentation will be led by Chaplain Tony Richardson-Eckes and Rachel Akiva, volunteer coordinator. Snacks provided.

Jan. 19: Freedom Rising Sunday  
On this Sunday, Presbyterians throughout our Presbytery will pledge to learn about, pray for, celebrate, and recommit to our shared mission of addressing the worsening plight of African American males in our city. Pittsburgh is one of five pilot cities of this important program birthed in Pittsburgh and adopted by the General Assembly. The presenter will be Ralph Lowe, the Presbytery’s director of Justice Ministries. Learn more about it and what we can do together.

Jan. 26: The Fight Against Human Trafficking  
Living in Liberty is an organization formed here in Pittsburgh in 2012 to help fight human trafficking. There are many facets to fighting this pressing issue today. Sherrill Rudy will share the story of how hope and help are extended to victims, how educating the public is important, and how we might find our place in this struggle.

Seekers  Garth Overlook Room  
Facilitator: Gwen Puza  
Jan. 12: Reflections on Israel, Palestine, and Persistent Hope  
Join Pastor Randy as he shares some reflections about the recent interfaith trip to Israel and Palestine. This Middle Eastern land tenuously balances more than 2,000 years of history, three major religious traditions, and significant challenges related to current events and social injustice issues. It calls us to approach both our faith and our scriptures with renewed commitment.

Jan. 19: ELPC Travelers on Recent Trip to Israel Share Memories and Impressions  
ELPC members Lynn and Bill Buchanan, Liz Hopkins, Gail Mallory, Polly McQueen, and Vivienne Selia went to Israel with Pastor Randy, Rabbi Gibson, and several members of Temple Sinai. As a panel, they will share their experiences and impressions from the trip.

Jan. 26: Medical Mission in Central America  
ELPC member Tim VanFleet will share his experiences from a recent trip to Guatemala with a mission team of doctors, nurses, and support people to hold medical clinics there. He also took handmade toys from ELPC’s Toymakers Group. Tim retired several months ago from his position as an Emergency Medicine Physician and administrator with UPMC.

Journey with Scripture  Highland Room  
Facilitators: Lora Bethea and Jan Lyle Irvin  
“So love the Lord, all you faithful...all you who wait for the Lord.”—Psalm 31:23–24  
Join us this Epiphany season and throughout the New Year as we begin reading and reflecting upon an alternative set of scripture readings from the Bible. Entitled “Year D”, the readings have been selected by Pastor Randy to complement and enlarge the scope of the traditional three-year lectionary cycle of Sunday readings. Join us as we reflect on these texts:

Jan. 12: Genesis 7:1–16; Psalm 69; Colossians 4:2–18; Acts 18:1–28  

Soul Food  Good Samaritan Room  
Facilitator: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members  
Jan. 12, 19, & 26: Just This  
We will begin discussing our next book, Just This, a short book by Richard Rohr. New participants are always welcome, and books are readily available.

Children & 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

Young Adults  McKelvy Room  
Jan. 12, 19, & 26: Exploring the Contemporaries Class  
As we begin a new year, we will continue exploring the adult Church School classes to get to know them better. This month, we will attend the Contemporaries class.
Children & Youth Ministry
Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x120 to RSVP.

Sun., Jan. 12: DG2! 12–3:30 pm
Youth in grades 4–12 from ELPC and Rodef Shalom will gather to enjoy lunch and work on service projects together. Permission slip and RSVP required.

Fri., Jan. 24: Tween Night | Ice Cream Social & Game Night 6–8 pm
Tweens in grades 4–6 are invited to play games and eat ice cream. As always, friends are welcome.

Sat.–Sun., Jan. 25–26: Confirmation Class Overnight 3 pm–9:45 am
Our Confirmation Class will gather for an overnight retreat at ELPC from Saturday afternoon until after Journey worship on Sunday. During our time together, we will focus on discipleship through participation in the sacraments and mission.

Fri., Jan. 31: Overnight and OHM Workday 8:30 pm
Youth in grades 6–12 are sleeping over at the church before joining the All Church OHM workday. We will be done on Saturday at 12:30 pm. Bring your sleeping bag and your work clothes (dress for construction mess and/or cold). For more information, including permission slip and full packing list, look at the church calendar or talk to Sara Hackett.

Welcome Our New Youth Workers

We are pleased to welcome two new part-time youth workers to ELPC, Nate Morley and Paul Seif!

They will be assisting with our programs to children and youth. They will be helping with club one sixteen (our Wednesday Evening ministry to children and youth), as well as serving as chaperones for events serving children, tweens, and teens.

About Our Young Adult Ministry
Our Young Adult Ministry welcomes all adults aged post-high school through their 20s and 30s. We are a community of students and professionals; married, single, or partnered; with or without children—and from different races, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, backgrounds, and with varied beliefs—building community together.
Presbyterian Women

Bible Study | Love Carved in Stone
Mon., Jan. 6 7 pm | Tues., Jan. 7 10:15 am
Join us for our Bible study, titled Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the 10 Commandments. This month’s session is Words of Love: Don’t Kill Each Other. The wounds that this Word addresses are the selfishness, hate, and fear that lash out and seek to destroy both God’s people and the beloved community.

Monday’s group will be facilitated by Sherry Anderson and meets in the Trustees Room. Tuesday’s group will be led by Michele Bossers and meets in the Second Floor Parlor, and it concludes with lunch featuring soup, as well as sides provided by attendees. We look forward to seeing you!

Spiritual Life

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

Sat., Jan. 18: Enneagram Retreat Day 9 am–4 pm
Join the Spiritual Life Committee in the Parlor on the second floor for a day retreat on the Enneagram. Lunch will be provided. There is no fee for the retreat; but please RSVP with the Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan or Norma Meyer.

Sun., Feb. 2: Thinking About Consciousness 12–3 pm
Mark your calendar for a Science and Theology conversation on Thinking about Consciousness. Are the “mind” and the “brain” separate? Do we really have free will or are all of our behaviors the result of a pattern of brain function? Is consciousness separate from the brain? Join the Spiritual Life Committee in the Parlor on the second floor to ponder these topics and more! Lunch provided.

Feeling Crafty?

Start the new year off with a new knitting project. The Knitting Group is working on special pieces for breast cancer survivors. We will meet on Tues., Jan. 7, following the Presbyterian Women Bible study.

The Sewing Group will meet on Mon., Jan. 13, 2:30–6 pm, to work on projects for the ELPC clothes closet, and for men and women in Guatemala.

Call Diane Jackson 412.441.6021 for more information on either group.
Art on Display | Stop by, Experience, and Learn

As you walk through the hallways of ELPC, you may notice works of art from various indigenous artists that say “You Are On _______ Land.” These are part of the #HonorNativeLand campaign by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture. Land acknowledgements are very common in other countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, as well as among tribal nations in the U.S. There’s also policy in some places to open events and gatherings by acknowledging the indigenous inhabitants of that land. For example, ELPC is situated on Lenape, Shawnee, and the Six Nations’ tribal lands.

For centuries, indigenous people have been resilient in the face of genocide, as well as forced relocation and assimilation. From 1778–1871, the U.S. government entered into more than 500 treaties with hundreds of Native American tribes; all of which have been violated in some way by the government. Land acknowledgements honor the original inhabitants, and they expose us—many for the first time—to these people.

One should also remember that these tribes still exist. There are currently 6.9 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives in the U.S., and 573 federally recognized tribes. Today, only 22% of indigenous people live on reservations or other trust lands.

Their’s is a vibrant community and culture doing major things across the country in filmmaking, language revitalization, fashion design, art, politics, engineering, music, environmental protection, and so much more. Let us not just acknowledge indigenous land and people one or two months of the year or around Thanksgiving. Let us acknowledge Indigenous land, people, and all that they are currently doing right here, right now.

Learn more about rewriting the narratives we have been told at illuminatives.org. Download the art you see at ELPC and the guide to practice acknowledgement at usdac.us/nativeland.

God created you. God loves you. Be yourself.

Artwork by Bunky Echo-Hawk (Pawnee-Yakama)
“...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.”

ELPC Building Closures
• New Year’s Day | Wed., Jan. 1
• Martin Luther King Jr. Day | Mon., Jan. 20

January Church Tours
• Trinity Chapel | Sun., Jan. 5, 12 pm
• Sanctuary & Chapel | Sun., Jan. 19, 12 pm

Play Café
Families with kids of all ages are invited to come together for fellowship and fun on Sat., Jan. 18, 4–6 pm. Kindermusik educator Christa Beck will lead a family music class at 4:30 pm, where children and their caring grown-ups can move, play, sing, and breathe together.

Following class, there will be a time of free play with stations for kids of all ages, and snacks for all. Bring yourselves and a snack or appetizer to share.

To ask questions or RSVP, contact Pastor Heather at HeatherS@coh.net.

Chatham Baroque to Perform
The ninth season of ELPC’s Cathedral Concerts series continues on Sat., Feb. 15, 8 pm, with a performance by Chatham Baroque in our intimate Chapel.

Regarded as one of the country’s most distinguished period ensembles, Chatham Baroque has excited local, national, and international audiences for nearly 30 years with dazzling technique and lively interpretations of 17th and 18th century music, played on instruments of the time.

Tickets can be purchased at ChathamBaroque.org. A limited number of complimentary tickets are available to ELPC members. Contact Dr. Edward Alan Moore for details.

Support iSERVE in 2020
Our church’s ministry depends on countless volunteers—everything from greeters and ushers to food providers and committee members. Beginning in January 2020, we will not have a designated staff person coordinating these volunteer efforts, but we still need your help!

Find an area in which you can help and contact the appropriate committee person or one of the pastors to share your interest in volunteering. We will keep advertising opportunities in the bulletin announcements, so don’t be hesitant to step up and lend a hand.