



## Plans to Reopen Our Church Building

As of the writing of this update, the church building remains closed to the public. Staff members have returned to work with a truncated, in-person schedule, combined with their continued remote-work schedules.

As federal, state, local, and church authorities advise, we will open the church building to members, friends, and visitors for pre-approved events. We expect such pre-approved, smaller events to return to ELPC this summer with incremental and intentional expansion to include more groups and people as safe and advisable.

The new normal at ELPC will follow governmental guidelines and good common sense procedures to keep our staff, visitors, and community safe. Please watch for updates at [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church) for specific dates and guidelines. We appreciate your patience during this unprecedented time.

## Confirmands Share Statements of Faith

Eleven youth joined ELPC as full members during a meeting of ELPC's Session on May 19. These youth participated in a year-long process of learning together through Confirmation Class. Through retreats, Sunday afternoon classes, and Zoom meetings, these youth explored their understanding of God, the Church, and the Spirit's call on their lives to be active members of ELPC. Their Confirmation was celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, as recordings of the youth professing their faith and reading excerpts from their *Statements of Faith* were shared in worship. Three youth will be baptized, and all 11 youth will be anointed with oil and prayed over when we can worship safely in person.

Throughout this edition of the *Reaching Out*, you will have the opportunity to read brief excerpts of the *Statements of Faith* that each youth wrote and presented to Session. We give thanks for the newest members of ELPC:

**Rachael Ammon, David Bellin, Charlotte Brake-Hoffman, Nora Brown, Boaz Chapman, Annabel Degenholtz, Shayla Esquivel-Brigido, Dylan Geibel, Corinne Krimmel, Ian Kuchera, and Christian Lewand.**

*"I believe that the Church is a group of people joining together to spread joy."—Boaz Chapman*

## Sunday Services

*\*Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

### Journey Worship | 8:45 am

July 5\* Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
July 12 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
July 19 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf  
July 26 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

### Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

July 5\* Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
July 12 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
July 19 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf  
July 26 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

## Taizé Prayer Service

*Wednesdays | 7 pm*  
Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan

*"I believe that living as a Christian means putting all your trust in God."—Christian Lewand*

## How to Stream Services

While the church building remains closed to the public, we hope that you're able to worship with us online!

Our Sunday Journey and Sanctuary worship services are being livestreamed on YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom. Or, if you'd like to listen to the services via telephone, call **929.205.6099** and enter Meeting ID **188.135.194** when prompted (press # if asked for a personal ID). If you need assistance connecting to worship, call Sara Hackett at **412.673.2926**.

Each Wednesday, a specially selected, archived Taizé prayer service is being restreamed. Once the church building reopens, we hope to resume livestreaming our Taizé services.

For more information and direct links to the streams, visit [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church).

## East Liberty Presbyterian Church



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Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Call | 412.441.3800  
Email | info@coh.net  
Visit | ELPC.church

### Staff Leadership

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#### **The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf**

*Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries*

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#### **The Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan**

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#### **Allen Miller**

*Lead Engineer*

#### **Dr. Edward Alan Moore**

*Music Director and Organist*

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## Pastoral Message

*The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor*



The journalist Leslie Jamison recently wrote an essay that included these lines:

*A few years into sobriety, I went to a potluck where no one ate or drank anything. Half of the people were alcoholic and the other half struggled with binge eating. So what activity could we do that doesn't involve putting something into our bodies? Everyone brought something to read out loud, and we listened to one another as if our voices were food.*

I found that description to be especially powerful and apt for our current condition. We have long been creatures of habit, filling our days with routines shaped by a limited pool of activities—eating, drinking, socializing with friends, working in offices or shopping in stores, gathering weekly for church services, and so on. Yet for more than three and a half months now, several of those commonplace functions have been forbidden, curtailed, or extremely limited. We have found other ways to fill our days, but it has required both patience and creativity: patience negotiating the social isolation and creativity to remind ourselves that our value is grounded in who we are and not just in what we do.

Another month is now before us. The simple progression from March to April to May, June, and July had been taken for granted before, but now it is a litany of names marking how long it has been since things were “normal.” The simple act of breathing has been changed dramatically by the memory of the traumatic injustice inflicted upon George Floyd. So many things we took for granted—going to the movies, eating in a restaurant, singing in a sanctuary—are now fraught with worrisome risks and likely no longer things we casually include in our regular routines.

One of the blessings of this COVID-19 season is that we are having discussions about important topics previously avoided thanks to the demands of our prior routines. Our defenses are down enough to allow for necessary conversations about race in America and challenging the flawed effectiveness of old models of police “force” (as opposed to police as public service “partners”). The barrage of information about the coronavirus has awakened our political activism, for it is readily apparent that viral pathogens will always be with us, but political incompetence leading to pandemic and thousands of deaths need not be.

Leslie Jamison wondered how you could do a boozeless, foodless potluck, and discovered that being together and fed by the spoken word could nurture life far richer than she'd ever imagined. It calls to mind the “Word made flesh” by which we are healed and made strong. Jamison offered these concluding thoughts:

*Grace never arrives as we imagine it... But suffering and grace live side by side as they always have. Grace locks eyes with pain from the other side of the sidewalk, six feet away, and they both keep walking.*

God's grace never arrives as we imagine, but know that it is always, always present in places of suffering. And it keeps walking—moving—lifting up—opening eyes—carrying us forward to that place we long to be. Thanks be to God.

*Randy Bush*

# Mission Matters

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

## FSR Team Offers New Health Disparities Program

Our Facing Systemic Racism Team launched an Anatomy of Disparities in Health Care program to increase awareness, explore ideas, and create plans to address the preventable differences and disparities in health care for African Americans. People of all ages are welcome to our study and discussion on **Saturdays, July 11 and 18**, 5–6 pm. Join us on Zoom or call **929.205.6099** to participate. Enter meeting ID# **840.6291.7020** and password **931778** when prompted.

## Seeking Justice During the COVID-19 Crisis

While we have been physically isolated from one another and our church, the Justice Committee has continued working on issues that bring us together. If you would like to participate in the Justice Committee, contact Carol Chonoska at [CarolChonoska@gmail.com](mailto:CarolChonoska@gmail.com).

- Our Environmental Team has completed two book studies and is working on a tree planting event.
- Our Human Safety and Dignity Team has been working with the Bukit Bail Fund to provide cash bail for people at the Allegheny County Jail. We were able to learn more about the criminal justice system, how bail works, and the way these issues disproportionately plague people of color. We will focus on ways we can bring about change to this system and work with the Foundation of HOPE at the Allegheny County Jail.
- We continue to support relief efforts through Casa San José.
- Together, with inclusive Presbyterian Churches in Pittsburgh, we are planning events for Delta PrideFest and People's Pride.

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*"I believe God is a positive force that can lead me to become a better person."*—Corinne Krimmel

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## FSR Team Recommends Books to Read

In support of our vision for ELPC to live into our designation as a Matthew 25 Church, the Facing Systemic Racism team recognizes that we cannot achieve this vision without all of us being better informed about issues related to race, and specifically, African Americans in our country. There are many resources available, so we will suggest a few options each month for you to read, listen to, or watch. This month, we offer a selection of books for you to consider. Whether you choose from this list or have other resources on this topic, please consider making time for this important faith work. Learn more about these books at [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church).

- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
- *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving
- *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson
- *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
- *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Daniel Tatum

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*"I believe that the most important part of my faith is that it helps me welcome and love everyone, which is what I believe is my job as a Christian."*—Annabel Degenholtz

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## Session News

The ELPC Session has continued to hold monthly Zoom meetings. There has been much to celebrate and discuss in these gatherings, including the following items:

- Examined and received the 11 members of the 2020 Confirmation Class;
- Welcomed and received 24 new ELPC members and 3 ELPC friends;
- Discussed the Payroll Protection Plan funds ELPC received, and committed to paying all staff through the end of June;
- Heard Property Committee recommendations on current and future building usage according to safe practices; and
- Celebrated Sonya-Marie Morley's enrollment as an Inquirer for ministry in the PC(USA).

The Session asks for the congregation's continued prayers as we make plans for the coming months regarding mission, ministry, education, and worship, seeking to serve Christ faithfully in this difficult season of COVID-19, racial injustice, and economic distress.

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*"I believe that God is accepting of all regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc."*—David Bellin

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## Congratulations to the Graduates of 2020

### Josh Bellin

*Culver Academies (Culver, Indiana)*  
Will attend Texas Christian University

### Phoebe Brown

*The Ellis School with honors*  
Will be attending Oberlin College

### Isaac Degenholtz

*Barack Obama Academy of International Studies (Valedictorian)*  
Will attend the University of Rochester

### Jason Ferrante

*Allegheny College*  
Earned bachelor's degrees, summa cum laude, in Political Science and Environmental Science, and a minor in Religious Studies

### Keith Irvin

*Allegheny College*  
Earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics

### Adylade Krimmel

*The Ellis School*  
Will attend Bryn Mawr College

### Ramsey Lewand

*Central Catholic High School*  
Will attend the University of Pittsburgh

### Joan Mukogosi

*New York University*  
Earned a bachelor's degree in Global Studies, and a minor in Public Health

### Joshat Mukogosi

*Allderdice High School*  
Will attend college to study Sports Management

### Mya Pizzuto

*Allderdice High School*  
Will attend Saint Vincent College

### Kiara Rockeymore

*The Neighborhood Academy*  
Will attend Seton Hill University

### Mark Steidl

*Community College of Allegheny County*  
Earned an associate's degree in Social Work Foundations

## Youth can Still Register for VCS at Home and Middle School Mission Bingo

VCS at Home (for pre-K–grade 5) comes with video instructions and a box of supplies to explore stories of Jesus visiting people's homes through worship, storytelling, activities, stem projects, and crafts.

Middle School Mission bingo (grades 6–8) gives prompts for doing mission work at home and in your neighborhood, and includes a box of supplies and prizes.

For more details, contact Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net) or 412.441.3800 x120.

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*"I believe that God is not just what other people think, he is also within us—each of us. All of us have a piece of God in us." —Shayla Esquivel-Brigido*

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## Pastor Mary Lynn Approaches Retirement

As many of you know, I am retiring at the end of August. It has been a joy and privilege to be part of this incredible church! I love my ministry at ELPC and have cherished the relationships that I have formed, the colleagues with whom I have served, and the times of working, growing, and worshipping. Never mind getting to "work" in this amazing space!

Over the past eight years, I have been challenged and deeply rewarded in crafting programming aimed at encouraging us all to mature spiritually. Whether exploring the Enneagram, meditation, science and theology, images of god, interfaith dialog, or a host of prayer forms, it has been a joy sharing, seeking, and growing together with you. Moreover, maintaining the rich traditions of the ELPC Taizé prayer service and labyrinth ministries has been the fulfillment of passions that I have held since originally participating in both during my seminary days at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary nearly 30 years ago.

But, it is the relationships that I have formed here which fill my heart and for which I am most grateful: the joy of being a part of a caring, creative, and collegial staff; the stimulation of great theological, philosophical, and spiritual dialog partners; and the humbling privilege of being allowed to share in your stories and in your lives. Such a blessing!

It grieves me to be preparing to leave you during this time of social distancing, without the opportunity to see you in person, share warmth, and say goodbyes. Know that I will be holding the people and ministries of ELPC in my heart.



*Mary Lynn Callahan*

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*"I believe that the Holy Spirit keeps us together even when we are separated." —Charlotte Brake-Hoffman*

# Presbyterian Women

## Stay Connected this Summer

PW at ELPC invites all women to attend Zoom gatherings on **Tuesdays, June 30 and July 28**, 12 pm. Bring your own lunch and join in an hour of sharing and listening about urgent issues of this present moment. Join the meetings on Zoom, or participate via telephone by calling **646.876.9923**. Enter meeting ID# **932.296.2649** and password **363373** when prompted. For more information, email **PW.ELPC@gmail.com**.

## Good News to Share

Kate Carlson, recently retired ELPC administrative assistant, and Sherry Anderson, immediate past PW moderator, have been awarded honorary lifetime memberships in PW. Well done, good and faithful servants!

*"I believe that Jesus's life, death, and resurrection means that death doesn't lessen our effect on the world, but makes it stronger." —Ian Kuchera*

## ELPC People

If you have news to share, contact Megan Leisher at [MeganL@coh.net](mailto:MeganL@coh.net) or 412.441.3800 x122.

## Good News

- Please welcome our new members **Patrice Ashbaugh, Max Gilbert Bauer, Kathryn "Kathy" Beach, Keith Beach, Stephanie Creasy, Jess Duvall, Suzanne Fanelli, Matthew Galla, Beverly Harris-Schenz, Jordan DiMarco Hartman, Edgar "Paul" Herrington IV, Emily Herrington, Deborah Hurrell, Kathryn "Kate" Jackson, Margaret "Molly" Peck, Paul Seif, Isaac Smith, Larry Ross Sweeney, Linda Sweeney, Brenden Taylor, and Meridith "Meri" Taylor Long**, as well as our new friends **Gail Foster, Jonah Koetke, and Michael Schenz**.
- Congratulations to ELPC Member **Sonya-Marie Morley** who graduated from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity and a Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry. Sonya-Marie received the Robert A. Lee Church History Prize.
- Congratulations to Student Minister **Samantha Coggins** who graduated from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with her Master of Divinity. Samantha received the Michael Wilson Keith Memorial Prize in Homiletics.
- Congratulations to ELPC member **Dr. Tucker Ferda** who was named Assistant Professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

## Prayers

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

- Alissa Panichella's grandmother
- Allen Miller's mother, Ruth Miller

## Soul Food Class Offers Summer Sessions

Our Soul Food Church School class will be offering summer sessions on some Sundays, 9:45 am, on Zoom. If you would like to join, please contact Tiffany Sudar at [tmsudar@gmail.com](mailto:tmsudar@gmail.com) or 412.527.8804 for more information.

*"I believe that Jesus could be described using words like 'Teacher,' 'Leader,' or 'Forgiver.' I believe Jesus died on the cross for our sins. I believe He was risen from the dead." —Rachael Ammon*

## Thank You, Church School Teachers!

The 2019–2020 Church School year was filled with opportunities to learn and grow in faith together, even as our in-person class time was disrupted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, learning continued through Zoom discussions (and pizza parties) and YouTube videos. We give thanks for the teachers who ensured that our faith was nurtured in new and creative ways, and praise God for their dedication, care, and love.

We extend thanks to our amazing teachers: **Sherry Anderson, Diana Armstrong, Linda Benedict, Damon Bethea, Lora Bethea, Trish Buben, Sandy Edgecombe, Jim Eng, Sara Hackett, Joe Hajdu, Carol Hoehn, Jan Irvin, Bill Johnson, Heather Lawrence, Stephanie Lewand, Nancy Magee, Rita Nordquist, Elaine Phillips, Jan Pressman, Gwen Puza, Tony Richardson-Eckes, Carolyn Russ, Kay Shissler, Tiffany Sudar, Russ Walker, and Evalynn Welling**.

We also extend a special word of thanks to **Sara Hackett**, who ensured that remote learning continued through her tireless efforts to establish technological connections, provide supplies for remote learning, and make sure that church members and families had the tools to connect to our ministries. Sara, thank you for your loving care of our church family during this challenging season!

*“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.”*

## ELPC Building Closure

The church building will be closed on **Friday and Saturday, July 3 and 4**, in observance of Independence Day.

*“I believe that God is the creator of life. I believe God loves everyone no matter what.” —Dylan Geibel*

## Check Out Our LGBTQ Ministry



Everyone is invited to our LGBTQ Ministry’s next monthly spiritual gathering on **Sunday, July 12, 12:30 pm**. We will share meeting time and fellowship via Zoom. Allies and LGBTQIA+

folks alike are welcome. Please contact Wil Forrest at [Wil@coh.net](mailto:Wil@coh.net) or 412.441.3800 x118 for more details.

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

*“I believe that one way to serve God is to love each other.” —Nora Brown*

## 2020 Summer Film Series

Each year, the Mission Board and Mission Committees sponsor and host a summer film series. As we live into our designation as a PC(USA) Matthew 25 Congregation, this year’s movies and documentaries will challenge us to continue our work as an anti-racist community and highlight the importance of environmentalism.

Links to watch the films will be available at [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church). Join our discussions on **Sundays, July 26–August 16**, after worship. Participate on Zoom or call **929.205.6099**. Enter meeting ID# **819.8076.6834** when prompted.

### July 26: *Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai*

Planting trees for fuel, shade, and food is not something that anyone would imagine as the first step toward winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet with that simple act, Wangari Maathai, a woman born in rural Kenya, started down the path that reclaimed her country’s land from 100 years of deforestation, provided new sources of food and income to rural communities, gave previously impoverished and powerless women a vital political role, and ultimately helped end Kenya’s 24-year dictatorship.



Watch *Taking Root* at [takingrootfilm.com/earth-day-2020](http://takingrootfilm.com/earth-day-2020).