



# Reaching Out

newsletter of east liberty presbyterian church

August 2020

## 2020 Summer Film Series

As we live into our designation as a PC(USA) Matthew 25 Congregation, the Mission Board and Mission Committees selected movies and documentaries for our 2020 Film Series that will challenge us to continue our work as an anti-racist community and highlight the importance of environmentalism.

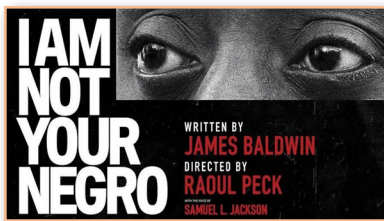
Please watch the selected films and join our discussions after worship on **Sundays, August 2, 9, and 16**. Participate on Zoom or call **929.205.6099**. Enter meeting ID# **819.8076.6834** when prompted.



### August 2 | Just Mercy

Based on the life of civil rights attorney Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy* places a spotlight on the systemic racism that plagues our society. The film urges viewers to be part of the change that is needed in our justice system and society, as well as to learn about our collective, yet unequal

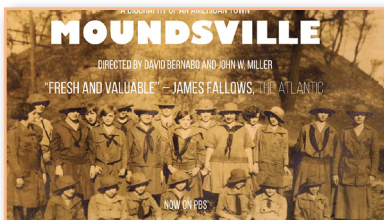
past, and the countless injustices that continue and have led us to where we are today. Watch at [JustMercyFilm.com](http://JustMercyFilm.com).



### August 9 | I Am Not Your Negro

A documentary directed by Raoul Peck, *I'm Not Your Negro*, is based on James Baldwin's unfinished manuscript, "Remember This House." Narrated by Samuel L. Jackson, this film takes us on a journey into Black history, connecting the civil rights movement to today's

#BlackLivesMatter movement. This visual essay explores racism through the stories of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and the Rev. Martin L. King, Jr. Watch at [tiny.cc/IamNotYourNegro](http://tiny.cc/IamNotYourNegro). (Warning: Use of the "N" word.)



### August 16 | Moundville

*Moundville, Biography of a Classic American Town*, by John Miller and David Bernabo, is "A gripping look at a fascinating West Virginia town wrestling with its past and fighting for its future, with lots of surprises along the way"—Joe Barrett, *The Wall Street Journal*.

Filmmaker and ELPC member John Miller will lead us in a discussion of the documentary. Watch at [PBS.org/show/moundville](http://PBS.org/show/moundville).

## Sunday Services

\*Celebration of the Lord's Supper

### Summer Worship | 11 am

Aug. 2\* Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
Aug. 9 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
Aug. 16 Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan  
Aug. 23 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
Aug. 30 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

## Taizé Prayer Service

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan

## Livestream Services

Our services are being livestreamed on YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom. For more details, visit [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church).

## Church Building Reopening Plans

As of the writing of this update, the church building remains closed to the public, but is incrementally and intentionally reopening in stages. In May, staff returned to work with a modified schedule. In June, we began allowing pre-approved, small, in-person events that follow special, safer guidelines.

As federal, state, local, and church authorities advise, we will open the church building more to members, friends, and visitors for additional pre-approved events. The new normal at ELPC will follow governmental guidelines and good common sense procedures to keep our staff, visitors, and community safe.

Watch for updates at [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church) for specific dates and guidelines. We appreciate your patience during this unprecedented time.

## East Liberty Presbyterian Church

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### Staff Leadership

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

*Music Director and Organist*

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## Pastoral Message

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



“We walk by faith, not by sight”—2 Corinthians 5:7. It’s a short, familiar verse and upon reflection, it is a very true statement. There are many times in our lives in which we step forward by faith, even if we can’t clearly see the path forward. Accepting a marriage proposal, bringing home a newborn baby from the hospital, weighing a major career move or job change—all these situations require us to step forward trusting that we will have the personal resources to navigate whatever the future may hold. We say a quick prayer, take a deep breath for strength, and cross over that threshold into an unknown future trusting that with God, all things are possible.

Our church continues to walk forward by faith, having to make decisions and set up plans lacking a clear textbook or instruction manual for this difficult pandemic season. This month we hope to begin a few small congregational services of worship. They will involve invited guests and focus on specific liturgical needs, such as celebrating the sacrament of baptism. They will hopefully prepare us for whatever the next stage of re-opening might look like, including the possibility of returning to worship in our sanctuary in early fall. Yes, there are many things that could force us to change our plans, but we choose to trust that God is near. With prudent planning and creative alternative options (such as continuing to livestream our services), we can eventually resume being a worshipping congregation of faith.

In every time of transition of our life, there is what we can “see”—the literal reality around us and the difficult choices within our own minds. But there is also a larger perspective we cannot see with our literal eyes, but must see with our spiritual vision. This larger perspective reminds us that God loves us and longs for us to be well, and that whatever the future may hold, God is aware of it and will be beside us as we experience it. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus—another great reminder from the apostle Paul found in Romans 8:39. Confident of that promise, we can walk by faith even if it means traveling a road in which sight and human resources are difficult to come by.

In Great Britain’s darkest hours of World War II, the people there felt alone and unsure how they were going to survive the 1941 bombing raids from the German Luftwaffe. Harry Hopkins was the American adviser sent by F.D.R. to reassure Winston Churchill and others that American help would be provided. But Britain was struggling beneath the devastating attacks and America was being slow to act on its promises. Reaching a point of desperation, during a small gathering in Glasgow, Churchill pushed Hopkins for some definite assurance from his American allies. Getting up to speak, Hopkins replied, “I suppose you wish to know what I am going to say to President Roosevelt when I return.” Then he began to paraphrase the famous passage from the book of Ruth: “Whither thou goest, I will go. And where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God, even to the end.”

When sight falters or fails, may faith sustain us. For we do not walk alone into the future, and with God truly all things are possible.

*Randy Bush*



# Mission Matters

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



## OHM is Looking for Workday Volunteers

Open Hand Ministries (OHM) is currently looking for volunteers to help on Saturdays and Wednesdays, 9 am–3 pm. The Saturday workdays are essential to tackling projects with more people. Please bring your own lunch. If you'd like to volunteer, kindly RSVP with Tim Raufer at [traufer@openhandpittsburgh.org](mailto:traufer@openhandpittsburgh.org).

Please note that OHM is following guidelines to ensure everyone's safety. Masks are required. Volunteers are practicing distancing and are working on outdoor tasks as much as possible. The site and tools are being cleaned regularly.

## Visit the African Healing Garden

The African Healing Garden (located at 160 Meadow St.) is the realized vision of longtime Larimer resident, Ms. Betty Lane. Its mission is to be a peaceful space where the community can experience serenity, engage in social and spiritual interaction, gain knowledge, and continue to evolve.

Volunteers are the core of the work done at the garden. Many neighbors in Larimer and beyond come together to plant, weed, mulch, build paths, and generally keep the garden looking beautiful. This community of workers are people who care about the world, its peoples, and its environment. Members of our faith family have been participants in this community as well. Work groups meet every Saturday over the summer. If you are interested in volunteering on any Saturday during the summer, please contact Jim Eng at [james.eng@sru.edu](mailto:james.eng@sru.edu) or Tim Van Fleet at [tavanfleet@gmail.com](mailto:tavanfleet@gmail.com).

Groups also may use the African Healing Garden for programming and meetings that are within the Garden's mission. To learn more, visit [@AfricanHealingGarden](https://www.facebook.com/AfricanHealingGarden) on Facebook or email [AfricanHealingGarden@gmail.com](mailto:AfricanHealingGarden@gmail.com) with specific requests.



## August Reading Recommendations from the FSR Team

As our congregation seeks to read, watch, and listen to 1,000 books, movies, and podcasts by Labor Day, our Facing Systemic Racism Team is suggesting a selection of articles and books for you to consider reading this month. Learn more about these resources at [ELPC.church](https://www.ELPC.church).

- "The Racist History of Abortion and Midwifery Bans"  
By Michele Goodwin  
Read at [tiny.cc/2dvhsz](https://tiny.cc/2dvhsz)
- "The Gaps Between White and Black America, in Charts"  
By Patrick Sharkey, Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, and Yaryna Serkez,  
*The New York Times*  
Read at [tiny.cc/wevhsz](https://tiny.cc/wevhsz)
- "Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Michael Santiago on why he is leaving the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette"  
By Ryan Deto, *Pittsburgh City Paper*  
Read at [tiny.cc/cgvhsz](https://tiny.cc/cgvhsz)
- *The Light of Truth*  
By Ida B. Wells  
Buy at [tiny.cc/hlvhsz](https://tiny.cc/hlvhsz)
- *When Affirmative Action Was White*  
By Ira Katznelson  
Buy at [tiny.cc/8lvhsz](https://tiny.cc/8lvhsz)
- *Sister Outsider*  
By Audre Lorde  
Buy at [tiny.cc/5nvhsz](https://tiny.cc/5nvhsz)
- *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*  
By Glenn Eric Singleton  
Buy at [tiny.cc/hnvhsz](https://tiny.cc/hnvhsz)
- *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*  
By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz  
Buy at [tiny.cc/9nvhsz](https://tiny.cc/9nvhsz)

## Session News

At their recent meeting, the Session:

- Reviewed the midyear financial status of the 2020 ELPC budget;
- Considered building usage and worship plans for the coming months;
- Discussed how to be an active, engaged church even if we are not able to gather for regular Sunday worship services; and
- Emphasized our commitment to the “Matthew 25” initiative, of building church vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

## Applications Now Being Accepted for the PHFA’s Rent Relief Program

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency’s (PHFA) Rent Relief Program is providing rent and mortgage assistance to people who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services is providing additional financial assistance on top of the PHFA funds, which also will help cover utilities.

The application is a multi-step process, and the Department of Human Services has contracted with several non-profit agencies to provide direct support to people who need assistance with completing the applications. Here a few agencies ready to help: Goodwill, EECM, Kingsley Association, Latino Community Center, Jewish Family and Children Services.

For more information please contact Pastor Patrice at [PatriceFS@coh.net](mailto:PatriceFS@coh.net) or Gerald McClendon, mission assistant.

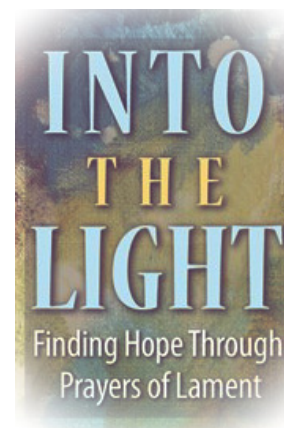
## Presbyterian Women

### PW Offers a Bible Study for this Time

How can we faithfully respond to difficult situations in the world? The ancients lamented to God, often in very explicit language. The lamenter finds strength to face the world as she remembers God, confident in the hope that God’s reign is coming. Prayers of lament are expressed in words, music, or art.

PW invites all women to a virtual lunch on Zoom on **Tuesday, August 18**, 12 pm, as we begin to explore this ancient form of prayer and protest. Bible study books may be picked up at ELPC’s Highland entrance on **Wednesday, August 5**, 11 am–1 pm, or **Tuesday, August 11**, 12–2 pm.

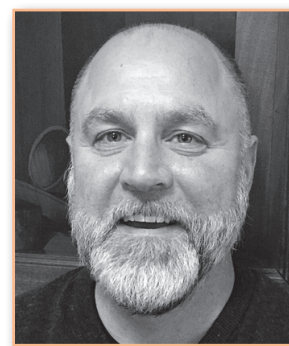
For more information or to ask questions, please email [PW.ELPC@gmail.com](mailto:PW.ELPC@gmail.com).



## Introducing Rev. BJ Woodworth

ELPC is pleased to welcome the Rev. BJ Woodworth to our program/ministerial staff as our new Minister for Spiritual Life and Taizé Prayer.

BJ and Rev. Mary Lynn will overlap in their ministries until the end of August, when Mary Lynn retires. We will be hosting opportunities for you to meet BJ later this summer over Zoom, through worship, and—when possible—in person. Please read more about BJ and welcome him to our faith family.



BJ graduated from Westminster College and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PTS), and received a certificate in Spiritual Transformation from the Transforming Center in Wheaton, Illinois. He is currently completing his Spiritual Direction training at the Hesychia School of Spiritual Direction, which focuses on “the ancient art of Christian spiritual direction in a multi-faith context.”

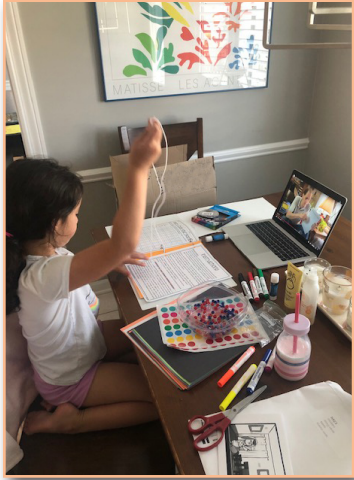
He served in the PC(USA) for the last 28 years as a teacher, pastor, spiritual guide, and companion to university students and young adults. For the past 15 years, he served as the founding and lead pastor at The Open Door Church. He also is a coach for the PC(USA)’s 1001 New Worshipping Communities initiative.

BJ loves to create space for people to cultivate and nurture their inner wisdom for fruitful life and work in the world, as well as for people on retreat to withdraw for times of rest, renewal, and reflection. His own spiritual path has been influenced by the desert mothers and fathers, Richard Rohr, creation, Henri Nouwen, yoga, the Enneagram, Celtic spirituality, Thomas Keating, the Ignatian exercises, brewing beer, solitude, silence and stillness, centering prayer, and living in the city.

He has lived in East Liberty since 1994 and is married to Katrina, who is a hatha yoga teacher and yoga therapist. They have four children: Kyra, Elena, Alex, and Zach. He is an avid homebrewer, enjoys playing soccer, and loves to read.



## Vacation Church School Update



Truly, this has been a summer unlike any other! Although the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to gather for a week this summer at ELPC, we were still able to learn, worship, and enjoy God from our own homes. The Children and Family Ministry Team created a curriculum that invited children to “Meet Jesus at Home” this summer. Boxes with supplies for activities were assembled and distributed to kids who participated, and videos were created with the help of our church family that offered instruction and encouragement to help kids learn and grow.

With **62 kids** from **38 families** registered—some who even joined us from other states—we remained connected to God and to one another.

We give thanks to everyone from our faith family who helped make VCS Possible: **Sherry Anderson, Amy Bialek, Trish Buben, Kristine Conley, Carol Hoehn, Valire Carr Copelend, Roberta London, Paul Seif, Elaine Phillips, DeeDee Frye, Stephanie Lewand, Jan Pressman, Heather Lawrence, Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt, Isaiah Wilson, Xander Yates, Pastor Randy Bush, Pastor Patrice Fowler-Searcy, Dr. Edward Alan Moore, Sara Hackett, Megan Leisher, Kay Shissler, Pastor Heather Schoenewolf, and Chenoa Stock.**

And thanks to the many families who helped make videos for worship, crafts, STEM, activities, and our Bible lessons—from the comforts of their own homes. We couldn’t have done this without you! Thank you to: the **Bush family**, the **Brake-Hoffman family**, the **Buben family**, the **Conley family**, the **Lewand family**, the **Chapman family**, the **Maclean/Thompson/Reiger family**, the **Reese family**, the **Mukogosi family**, the **Bethea family**, the **Williams family**, the **Leisher family**, the **Yates-Seif family**, the **Lawrence family**, the **Degenholtz family**, the **Moon family**, the **Esquivel-Brigido family**, and the **Hardy family**.



## Youth Activities

For more information on youth activities, contact Sara Hackett at **412.673.2926** or **SaraH@coh.net**.

### Tween Game Night on Zoom

Youth in grades 4–6 are invited to join us on **Friday, August 7, 7–8 pm**, for scavenger hunts, silly faces, charades, and other games. Contact Sara for the Zoom information.

### More Ways to Connect

While we’re unable to offer in-person youth programming this summer, Sara would love to help you connect to mission opportunities, service projects, spiritual practices, faith explorations, and other ways to love God and our neighbors. Give Sara a call or send her an email with questions and ideas, as well as to catch up or check in.

## 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

- Congratulations to **Antwone** and **Sarah Wright**, who were united in marriage on June 5.
- Please welcome our new members and friends: **Betsy Binder, Elia Espinosa, Patrick Panebianco, and Jeff Parsons.**

### Thanks

- Thank you to everyone who prayed for me, sent cards, and called after my surgery. I appreciated it!  
—Peta Harrigan Cole

### Prayers

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

- Cathleen Malmstrom’s brother, Paul
- Suzanne Wolfe’s 99-year-old father, the Rev. Dr. Robert H. Morris
- Ryan Booher’s cousin, Josh

*“...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.”*

## Summer Church School Classes

Our Soul Food and Parenting Circle Church School classes are continuing to meet on Sundays, 9:45 am, throughout the summer. If you are interested in joining in, please contact Sara Hackett at **412.673.2926** for details.

Our regular Church School classes for people of all ages will resume on **Rally Day, Sunday, September 13.**

## Attend Our Spiritual Gathering



Everyone is invited to our LGBTQ Ministry's next spiritual gathering on **Sunday, August 16, 12:30 pm.** We will share meeting time and fellowship via Zoom. Allies

and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are welcome. Contact Wil Forrest at **Wil@coh.net** or **412.441.3800 x118** for more details.

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

## Hope Academy @ Home

Hope Academy will continue to offer online dance, theater, and music classes, as well as private lessons for the fall term. Until we can be back together, in-person, the focus will be on skill-building, individual coaching, special projects and master classes. Visit **HopeAcademyArts.com** to register and apply for scholarships. We'll see you (online) in September!



*Cellist Derrick Idubboe performing during Hope Academy's 2020 Spring Recital on Zoom.*