



East Liberty Presbyterian Church

www.ELPC.church

11 am Worship Service
Sunday, December 27, 2020





EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 412.441.3800 www.ELPC.church

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. (Strategic Vision mission statement, 2011)

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 27, 2020 — 11 AM LIVESTREAM WORSHIP

PRELUDE

“Nativity Suite”
Oh, Come, Emmanuel
Silent Night
Shepherds
The Three Kings
Joy to the World

Jon Tyillian, *organ*
Wilbur Held

OPENING WORDS

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

SHARING GOD’S PEACE

The Rev. Dr. Bush

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **Y también contigo.**

And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP *(responsive reading)*

The Rev. Dr. Bush

Leader: Christ is born! Alleluia!

People: **Jesus is among us! Alleluia!**

Leader: The Word has become flesh! Alleluia!

People: **Let us break forth into singing, for God has redeemed us in a Savior who is Christ the Lord! Alleluia! Amen!**

HYMN #136

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

GO TELL IT

Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *(Refrain)*

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. *(Refrain)*

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *(Refrain)*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Kathryn Ophardt

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

Kathryn Ophardt

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: **En Jesucristo tenemos perdón!**
¡Alaben a Dios!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Praise God!

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:15-21

Jean Kennedy

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

TIME FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

HYMN #146

"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.
Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.

Angels sang about his birth; wise men sought and found him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
He is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger.
Son of God, of humble birth, beautiful the story;
Praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glory!

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

The Rev. Dr. Bush

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Galatians 4:1-7

The Rev. Dr. Bush

My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

SERMON

"The Incarnation Committee: A Christmas Story"

The Rev. Dr. Bush

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Mary, Did You Know"

Beth and Charlotte Bush, *soloists*

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

OFFERING INVITATION & PRAYER

The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

We offer our gifts in response to God's love, and the grace of Jesus Christ, which we seek to make known through the ministries of this congregation. Please visit www.ELPC.church/donate if you would like to make a contribution.

HYMN #143 (*vs. 1, 2, 4*)

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

REGENT SQUARE

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth;
You, who sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!
Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!
All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!

BLESSING & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Dr. Bush

POSTLUDE

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella”

Jon Tyillian, *organ*
Keith Chapman



PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY’S SERVICE

Preaching: The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

Liturgists: The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
The Rev. BJ Woodworth
Jean Kennedy
Kathryn Ophardt

Musicians: Jon Tyillian, *Organist*
Beth Bush, *Cantor/Soloist*
Charlotte Bush, *Cantor/Soloist*

A/V: Tim Benedict
Wayne Gaines

As part of ELPC’s mission to extend radical
hospitality to all, our full worship service
is now being livestreamed on:

Facebook

www.facebook.com/EastLibertyPresbyterian

YouTube

<http://tiny.cc/elpc-youtube>

and archived at www.ELPC.church

If you would like to make a
contribution, please visit:
www.ELPC.church/donate

GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

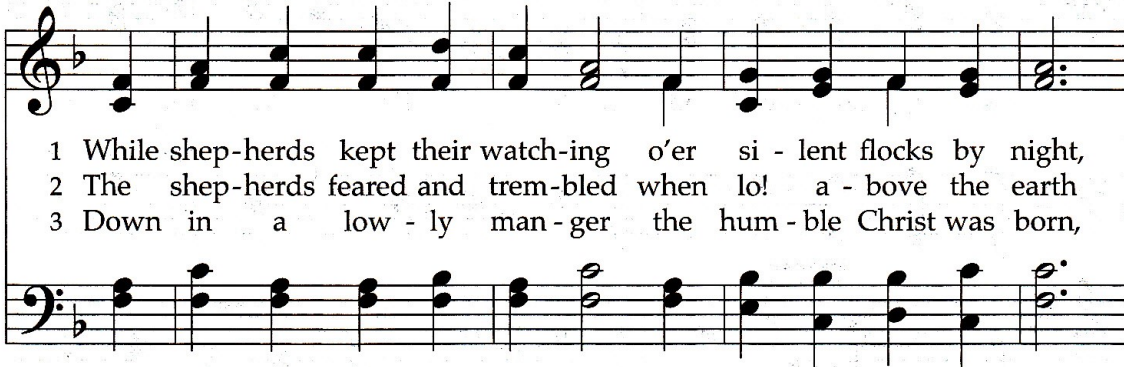
Refrain $\text{♪} = \text{♩}^3$



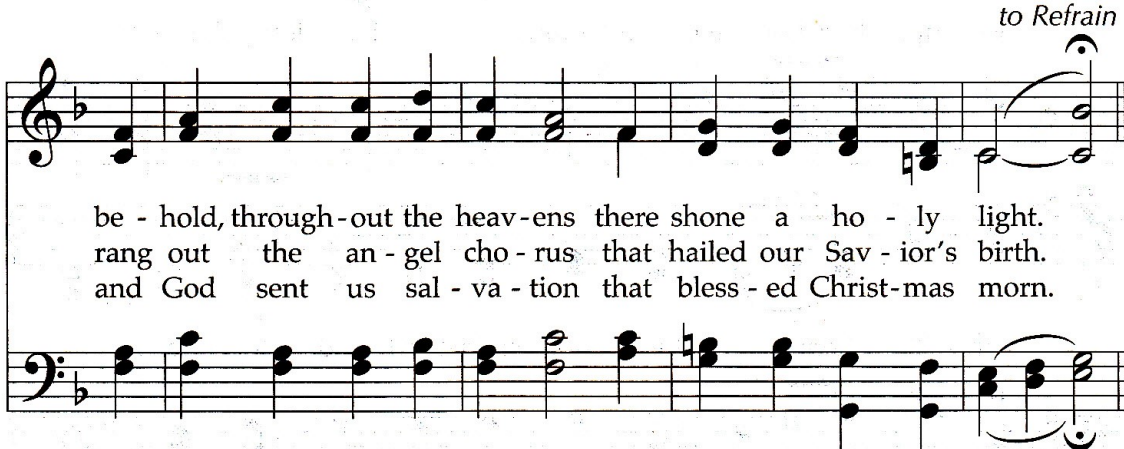
Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



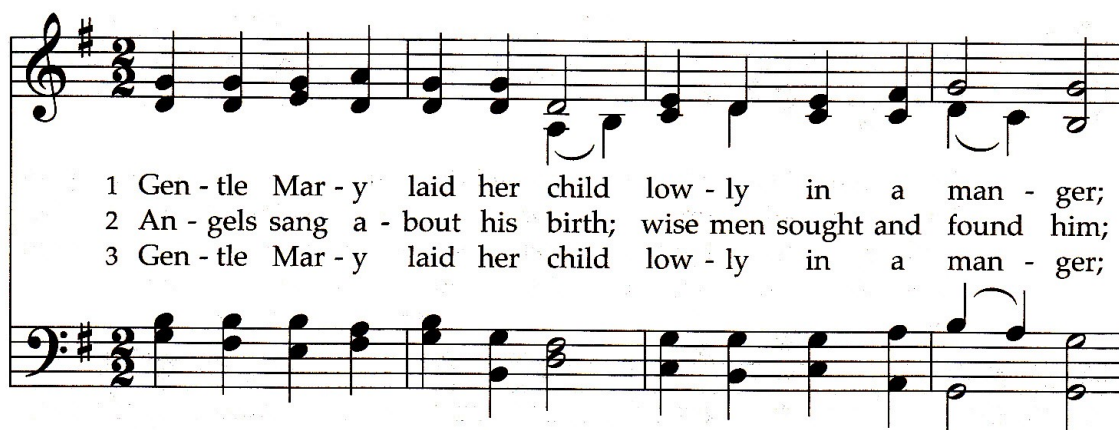
1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
3 Down in a low - ly man-ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.

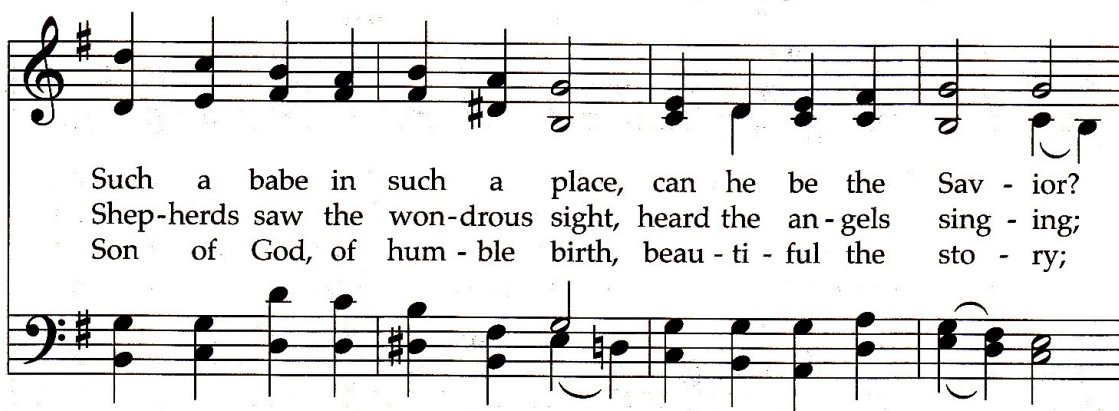
GENTLE MARY LAID HER CHILD



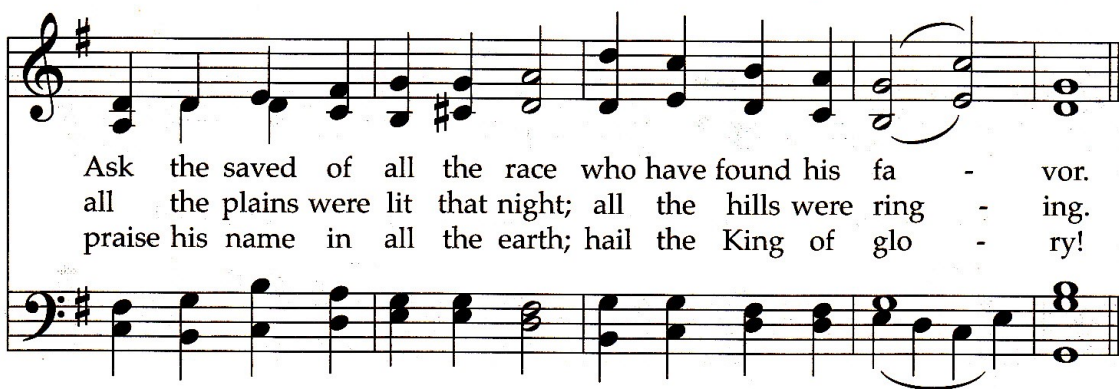
1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;
2 An - gels sang a - bout his birth; wise men sought and found him;
3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;



there he lay, the un - de - filed, to the world a strang - er.
heav-en's star shone bright - ly forth, glo - ry all a - round him.
he is still the un - de - filed, but no more a strang - er.



Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Sav - ior?
Shep-herds saw the won-drous sight, heard the an - gels sing - ing;
Son of God, of hum - ble birth, beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;



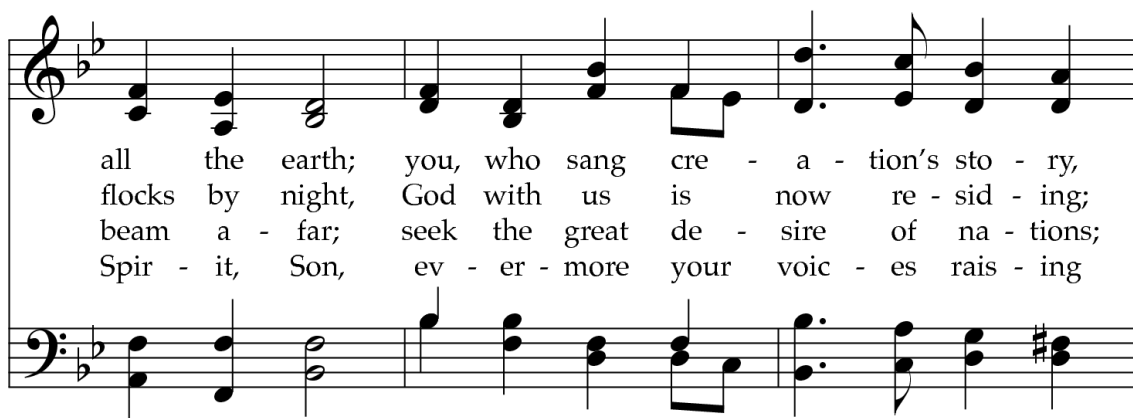
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his fa - vor.
all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ring - ing.
praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glo - ry!

This 20th-century Christmas text by an English-born Canadian clergyman was originally a poem called "The Manger Prince." It gains a certain antique flavor by being set to a late medieval song associated with springtime. (The tune name means "The flowering time is near.")

ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY (*vs. 1, 2, 4*)



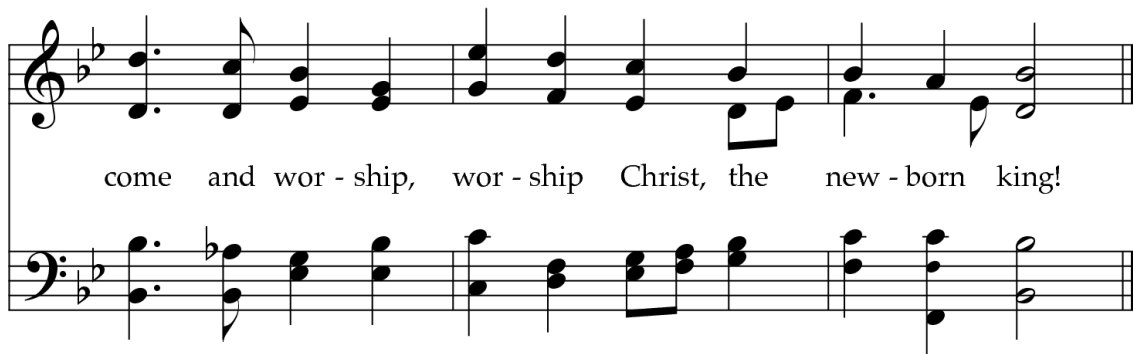
1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your
 3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; bright - er vi - sions
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,



all the earth; you, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;
 beam a - far; seek the great de - sire of na - tions;
 Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing



now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 yon - der shines the in - fant light: come and wor - ship,
 you have seen his na - tal star:
 to the e - ter - nal Three in One:



come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

This familiar carol was first published as a poem in the Christmas Eve 1816 issue of a newspaper the author edited in Sheffield, England. The tune name celebrates the location of a prominent Presbyterian Church in London, sometimes called the "Presbyterian cathedral."

PW VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY: LAMENTING LIFE

Monday, Jan 4 from 7–8:30 pm

Tuesday, Jan 5 from 10 am–12 pm

The practice of lament has the power to change us and our lives. Such change may be most evident when we lament lives filled with suffering and pain beyond our control. Job cursed the day he was born (Job 3). Yet, he persisted in his lament until God answered. Job has much to teach both lamenters and their companions.

All women are invited to practice lament. Join PW on Tuesday, Jan 19 from Noon-1 pm to *Share Lament*. For details and Zoom info, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

LGBTQ MINISTRY

- Friday, Jan 8 from 5-6 pm: Happy Hour*

At the end of a long week, come together with friends. Pour your favorite beverage, log on/call in to Zoom, and share in fellowship and fun for an hour. “See” you there!

- Saturday, Jan 16 from 9am-7pm: Day Retreat*

Members and friends of ELPC’s LGBTQ Ministry are invited to spend the day with our church family while we celebrate the new year through worship, discussion, creative activities, reflections, and fellowship on Zoom. This will be a fun and safe place to explore and to laugh. Please RSVP to Wil by Sunday, Jan 10, or contact him with any questions (Wil@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x118).

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY

- Sunday, Jan 10 from 12:30-1:30 pm: Letter Writing*

A letter can make someone feel loved, whether it’s a note to a friend, a message to someone in your church family, or a letter advocating for justice half way around the world. Youth in grades 6–12 will write letters to folks both in our church and through Amnesty International’s *Write for Rights* campaign. RSVP to Sara so she can mail you supplies ahead of time (SaraH@coh.net).

- Sunday, Jan 17 from 5:30-6:30 pm: Tween Night Cooking Class*

Tweens in grades 4–6 will gather on Zoom to make dinner for their families. We will be making an easy ricotta gnocchi and “dirt” for dessert.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

Spiritual direction is the practice of accompanying another in their own attentiveness to the movement of God and their everyday, ordinary lives. The practice involves silence, listening, reflection and discernment. If you think you might be interested in this or are just curious, contact Rev. BJ Woodworth (BJW@coh.net).

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

- Friday, Jan 8 from 7-9 pm: Virtual Game Night*

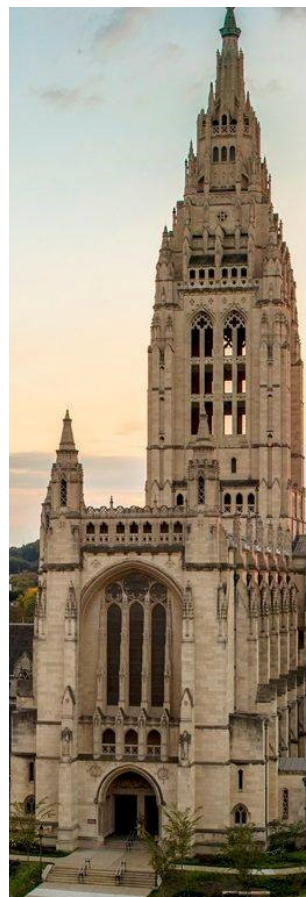
This Game Night will begin with trivia followed by other games on the Jack Box platform. Everyone can play along on their own mobile devices by using a browser. Two devices do make it easier but you also can go between Zoom and browser. Grab your snacks and settle in for a night of fun!

- Wednesday, Jan 13 from 8-9 pm: Do the “Write” Thing*

One Wednesday every month, we take a different approach to “writing,” whether it is reflecting, drawing, meditation, visual art, social justice, or communicating to others. Whether you write, type, voice text, use communication symbols, or draw, please join us!

- Monday, Jan 18 from 1-3 pm: Virtual 29th Annual MLK Celebration*

Peoria, Illinois, Public Employees for Community Concerns’ 29th annual MLK Celebration is virtual this year. Hear Dr. Bernice King speak from 1–2 pm, and then YAMs may join our Zoom discussion from 2–3 pm. Ticket cost will be covered by Young Adult Ministry. Please RSVP to Kelli Booher (KelliB@coh.net) to attend.



There’s Still Time to Support Our

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Stewardship pledges for 2021 will still be received during the month of January. While the response to date has been generous, a slight overall decrease in giving has occurred.

If you have not yet submitted a pledge or would like to make an extra gift for the coming year, you can do so online at ELPC.church or by contacting Rachelle Calfee, ELPC’s bookkeeper (RachelleC@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x134).

Together we can make sure that ELPC’s light brightly shines in the new year!