

# **Holy Week and Easter Services**



During Holy Week, join us for special livestream worship services as we complete our Lenten journey through the desert together by recalling the darkness and light of this church season.

Wed., March 31: Taizé Stations of the Cross 7 pm | Led by Pastor BJ

**Thurs., April 1: Maundy Thursday** 7 pm | Led by Pastor Randy

Fri., April 2: Good Friday
7 pm | Led by Pastor Patrice

Sun., April 4: Easter Sunday 8:45 am | Led by Pastor Heather 11 am | Led by Pastor Randy

# **Commemorating Earth Day 2021**



All Our Relations: Nourishing the Earth, Ourselves, and One Another



We do not exist independently. Everything relies on everything else in order to live and thrive. This year, ELPC will commemorate Earth Day by honoring our interdependence with all of life as we nourish the Earth, ourselves, and one another.

Look for announcements at **ELPC.church** and in the weekly news flashes for opportunities to explore Creation Spirituality at Garfield Community Farm on **Sat., May 1**, 9–11am; plant a tree; grow a flower; take your kids on a nature photo scavenger hunt; hike in a

Pittsburgh park; help with a community garden; learn about locally grown foods and how eating local nourishes you, your neighbor, and the Earth; explore your ecological identity; and share stories of experiences in nature from your childhood that have remained precious to you all your life.

Make sure to join us on **Sun., April 25**, as we commemorate Earth Day in our worship services and Church School classes, as well as an opportunity to drive by the church to pick up vegetable seeds for spring planting!

For more details, contact Nancy Heastings at **n.heastings@comcast.net**.

### **Livestream Services**

Our services are being livestreamed on YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom. For more details, visit **ELPC.church**.

### **Sunday Services**

\*Celebration of the Lord's Supper

### Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Theme: Seeing Old Things in New Ways

April 4\* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

April 11 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 18 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 25 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

#### Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

April 4\* Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

April 11 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 18 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

April 25 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

### **Taizé Prayer Service**

Wednesdays | 7 pm Rev. BJ Woodworth

### Weekday Prayer Opportunities

During the week, ELPC offers a variety of opportunities for you to take time to pray, meditate, and recharge. Please join us for these brief sessions!

### **Contemplative Prayer**

Tuesdays | 7:30–8:15 am

tiny.cc/spiritual-life (passcode mindful)

#### **Intercessory Prayer**

Tuesdavs | 8–8:20 am

tiny.cc/intercessory-prayer

#### Mindfulness Meditation

Thursdays: 7:30–8:15 am 7–8 pm

tiny.cc/spiritual-life (passcode mindful)

### **East Liberty Presbyterian Church**

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

### **Staff Leadership**

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

Pastor

RandyB@coh.net | x123

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
Associate Pastor for Mission Ministries
PatriceFS@coh.net | x130

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries
HeatherS@coh.net | x121

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

Director of Spiritual Life Ministries
and Minister of Taizé Prayer

BJW@coh.net | x141

Kathryn Ophardt Seminary Intern kophardt@pts.edu

#### **Linda Addlespurger**

Director of Hope Academy
HopeAcademyArts@gmail.com | x112

#### **Debbie Banton**

Facility Administrator
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#### **Wil Forrest**

Director of Church Operations, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry Wil@coh.net | x118

#### Sara Hackett

Coordinator of Christian Education and Youth Ministry SaraH@coh.net | x120

> **Allen Miller** *Lead Engineer*

**Dr. Edward Alan Moore** *Music Director and Organist*EdM@coh.net | x124

#### Rachelle Calfee

RachelleC@coh.net | x134

Megan Leisher

MeganL@coh.net | x122

Norma Meyer Norma@coh.net | x111

**Venetia Singletary** VenetiaS@coh.net | x116

## **Pastoral Message**

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor



On Easter Sunday, our Book of Common Worship offers this prayer of adoration:

Glory to you, O God: you have won victory over death, raising Jesus from the grave and giving us eternal life. Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life. Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth. Glory to you, O Blessed Trinity, now and forever. Amen.

On Easter and for several weeks thereafter, we re-tell the story of Christ's resurrection. We sing hymns about the victory of life over death, hope over despair. The Lenten refrains of "Lord in your mercy" are replaced with joyful "Alleluias." And even if we cannot fill the pews on Easter morning, we have memories of organ, brass, and robed choir members grandly processing down the center aisle to "Jesus Christ is Risen Today."

But must the words of Easter be restricted to our church worship services? On the Monday after Easter, what conversations might emerge if we mention to someone on the street about Jesus' resurrection from the grave giving all of us lasting hope? Can you imagine sharing with a friend how the Easter season is a comforting reminder that God's Holy Spirit leads us (individually, nationally, globally) into all truth? If we're honest, using Easter language outside the church walls can be tricky. Many people of faith, and people who question faith, have sincere doubts about the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Strangers and acquaintances we might meet may well wonder how we are defining truth (even "Holy Spirit led truth") in this persistent season of divisions and distrust.

Easter talk outside church walls is definitely challenging, unless you remember one key concept. Jesus wasn't resurrected from the dead to make one day special. The victory over sin, death and despair wasn't won so that a special anniversary can be added to the worship calendars of churches the world over. And ultimately, the point of Christianity is not to focus attention on ourselves as believers in distinction to everyone else outside our church walls. No, Easter opens our eyes to how every day is special. Christ's victory has much less to do with us and much more to do with everyone else. Easter doesn't tell us much about religion; it tells us about everything else in the world.

The language of faith isn't designed to just talk about a few "religious" things. It is meant to talk about <u>everything</u> that exists—life, death, community, justice, suffering, fear, hope, love. Easter reminds us that every time we try to contain "faith language" to church settings, Christ bursts forth from our liturgical tombs and sanctified sepulchers and shines resurrection light onto the streets and communities in which we live. Every time we feel hesitant to talk about holy resurrections, Christ shakes us and directs our conversations to the countless mundane-yet-miraculous resurrections happening every day: returning citizens starting over after prison, former addicts finding healing, souls and bodies abused in relationships discovering safety and healing love, national policies shifting away from racism and inequity to fresh commitments to serve the common good. So boldy offer the Easter prayer of adoration on Easter Sunday and every day of the year!

Randy Bush

### **Mission Matters**

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

The Impact of Community Gardens and Urban Farms in Restoring Our Earth, Our Health, and Our Communities



Join us after worship on **Sun., April 25**, for a powerful encounter with three local leaders in community gardening and urban farming: **Raqueeb Bey**, Founder and executive director of Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-op; **AJ Monsma**, community engagement officer at Garfield Community Farm; and **Robert Grey**, farm education and outreach coordinator at Grow Pittsburgh.

Join us on Zoom at **tiny.cc/elpc-gcf** and enter passcode **713012**. For more information, contact Susan Spangler at **sspanglerlcsw@gmail.com**.

### ELPC Justice Committee Continues to Support People in Allegheny County Jail

People housed in Allegheny County Jail are now able to access books through the Carnegie Library System, so we no longer need to collect printed materials. We thank you for your previous support in collecting books and magazines.

How can we continue supporting those who are in the jail? The Justice Committee will host a mission drive-by on **Sun., April 11**, 1:30–3:30 pm, at the half-circle driveway on Highland Ave. The following items will be collected: **shampoo and conditioner** (for differing hair types), **body wash, deodorant, lotion, bar soap**, and **toothpaste**. All of these items must be of a regular size (not travel or super). You also may donate **jigsaw puzzles** (with all of the pieces).

If you would like to work with the Justice Committee on cash bail, solitary confinement, the diversion program, mentorship program and other criminal justice issues, contact Carol Chonoska at **carolchonoska@gmail.com**.

# **April Environmental Tip**



Now—before air conditioning season begins—is the perfect time to switch to an all-renewable source for your electricity. Rates tend to be lowest in early spring, so take this opportunity to lock in a good price for the next 12 months. Electricity supplied by distribution companies (like Duquesne Light) is produced with a hefty contribution from burning fossil fuels (natural gas, coal), which releases greenhouse gases and contributes to climate change.

Multiple companies offer plans that let you choose renewable sources. And switching is easy at **PAPowerSwitch.com**! Once you decide on a supplier, they will contact your utility company and initiate the change. Here are some tips:

- Look for 12-month, fixed-price contracts instead of variable-price rates
- Mark your calendar to renew your contract at a favorable rate in a year

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee investigated this topic in depth. Contact Nancy Heastings at **n.heastings@comcast.net** for more details.

### **ELPC Session News**

The ELPC Session held a virtual retreat on March 16, led by the Rev. Sheryl Kinder-Pyle, executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Inland Waters (Spokane, Washington).

The retreat gathered current and incoming elders together with staff to discuss the lessons we have learned during the past year of pandemic disruption—reviewing how ELPC responded to our congregation members and our community, and exploring the ways God's Spirit is leading us for the months ahead.

This was a fruitful and positive time together and a second retreat will be held later this fall.

# Earth Day Photo Scavenger Hunt



Join us **Sun., May 2**, for a fun-for-allages photo scavenger hunt that can be done in Highland Park or your yard and neighborhood. The Children and Family Ministry Team and staff will be at Lake Point Shelter in Highland Park from 1:30–3:30 pm, with hands-on Earth Day activities for all ages!

The photo scavenger hunt will be happening in real time via Flipgrid, so you may join in the fun no matter where you are. And if you can't join us Sunday afternoon, the photo sharing will remain open all week.

Please register by emailing Sara Hackett at **SaraH@coh.net** for all the details and instructions.

### **Christian Education**

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf, Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries

**Note:** Adult classes are held on Sundays, 9:45 am, via Zoom.

### **Children** | **Preschool–Grade** 5

EARTH DAY

This month, our theme is "Caring for Creation" and we will explore ways we can enjoy and care for God's creation. If you haven't signed up for Church School, register at **ELPC.church**. We also will gather on Zoom on **Sun., April 25**, 10–10:30 am, so we can explore our theme together.

### Middle School | Grades 6-8



We will meet on **Sun., April 18**, 12:30 pm, via Zoom for conversation and activities on the ways we notice God's goodness in God's creation.

### High School | Grades 9–12

We will meet on **Sun., April 25**, 12:30 pm, via Zoom.

### **Journey with Scripture**

Facilitators: Lora Bethea and Jan Lyle Irvin

"Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven with an eternal gospel to proclaim to all who live on the earth— every nation, race, language and tribe. It said in a loud voice, 'Give reverence and glory to God, for the hour of judgment has come. Worship the One who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.'"

-Revelation 14:6-7

Into Easter and Earth Day, we read from the wells of the Psalms, Wisdom literature, and the Book of Revelation. They offer an experiential feast: comforting and disturbing visions, intimate confessions of our complicity and alienation from the world at hand, deep questions on how we really know life, and encouragement for giving reverence and glory to God. Our world, personally and corporately, is passing away. A new one emerges for us to live into with assurance and love. God, grant us wisdom to know the things to hold fast to and the things to let go. Join us on the journey.

**April 11:** Psalm 48; Wisdom of Solomon 8:1–21; Revelation 14:1–20

**April 18:** Psalm 24; Wisdom of Solomon 9:1–18; Revelation 15:1–16:21

**April 25:** Psalm 89:20–37; Prayer of Manasseh 1–15; Revelation 17:1–18.

### **Parenting Circle**

Facilitator: Trish Buben

#### **April: This Life That Is Ours**

We will continue discussing excerpts from Lauren Burdette's book, *This Life That Is Ours*.

#### **Seekers**

Facilitator: Gwen Puza | gpuza9@gmail.com

# April 11: How China is Persecuting their Muslim Uyghur Community

This alarming video on how China is controlling the Muslim Uyghur community is a *PBS FRONTLINE* special undercover report, filmed in China's secretive Xinjiang region. The video investigates the Communist regime's mass imprisonment of Muslims, and its use and testing of sophisticated surveillance technology against the Uyghur community.

# April 18: The Church in Iraq | Stories of Faith & Faithfulness Meet your Presbyterian family in Iraq and learn about

the congregations in Basrah, Baghdad, and Kirkuk, who continue in their ministry and mission despite the enormous challenges in their troubled land. We also will learn of an initiative to rebuild the church in Mosul, destroyed by ISIS, but which has the distinction of being one of the first Protestant churches established in the Middle East.

Our speaker Marilyn Borst has traveled extensively to Iraq since 1998, and was most recently there in 2019. She is the associate director of The Outreach Foundation, an independent Presbyterian mission agency, which was founded over 40 years ago to help connect congregations to God's work around the world.

#### **April 25: Neighborhood Ecology**

EARTH

Climate change and urbanization are global issues. ELPC took a big step a few years back in creating our rain gardens. But how might our own neighborhood or yard make a difference? Join Ben Ledewitz, a local ecological construction expert, and ELPC member Stefani Danes for a close-to-home approach to caring for the Earth and each other. We'll talk about how understanding our local ecology enables us to build better relationships with both our natural surroundings and our neighbors.

#### Soul Food

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

#### **April 4: Easter Greetings**

On Easter Sunday, we will share Easter greetings and our favorite parts of the gospel resurrection stories.

#### April 11 and 18: In My Grandmother's House

We will begin discussing our new book by Yolanda Pierce, titled *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit.* 

#### **April 25: Creation Spirituality**



On Earth Day Sunday, we will hear about and discuss Creation Spirituality with the help of Stephanie and Kevin Bell, colleagues of Pastor BJ.

# **Children & Youth Ministry**

Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Ed. & Youth Ministry

To RSVP for an event, get Zoom information, or ask questions, please contact Sara Hackett at **SaraH@coh.net** or **412.441.3800 x120**.

**Sat., April 10: Youth Mission Project** | **Gardening** *12:30–1:30 pm* Youth in grades 6–12 will meet at and be dismissed from Garfield Community Farm. RSVP to Sara by **Wed., April 7**, or by completing the online permission form.



**Sat., April 17: Tween Night** | **Out-Of-The-Box Building Competition** *7 pm* Tweens in grades 3–6 will gather together on Zoom to make upcycled creations out of cardboard boxes. RSVP to Sara and start saving your biggest and best cardboard boxes.

# **Young Adult Ministry**

Kelli Booher, Interim Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries

Contact Kelli Booher at **KelliB@coh.net** or **405.501.0711** to RSVP for an event or to ask questions. Get YAM text updates by texting "YAM" to **412.612.2594**.

Thurs., April 8: Exploring Our Ecological Identity 6:30–8 pm
"Developing a profound sense of oneself in relationship to natural and social ecosystems is necessary grounding for the difficult work of environmental advocacy." Through hands-on activities, we will dscuss and learn how to construct our ecological identity: using the direct experience of nature as a framework for our personal decisions, professional choices, political action, and spiritual inquiry. We will be guided by Mitchel Thomashow's book, Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist. Reading is not required to participate.

#### **Sat., April 24: Spring Series** | **Spiritual Fermentation** 6–8 pm

For centuries, beer has been a means for spiritual growth—from monks embracing the contemplative process of brewing "liquid bread" to the ways it has stimulated meaningful conversations when shared. Fermentation also provides a rich metaphor for the transformation into which the Spirit invites us. Pastor BJ will lead us as we continue exploring the connections among beer, monastic practice, and "spiritual fermentation." Each gathering will include a tasting of a particular beer style, a reflection on brewing and our spiritual lives, and a guided prayer practice.

The series is open to young adults, 18–40 years old. You must be 21+ to participate in the tasting and the cost is **\$5/person**. RSVP to Kelli by **Wed., April 21**.

#### Sat., May 1: YAM Day Retreat | Highland Park 11 am

Nice weather is here so let's retreat safely—and six feet apart—for the day at the Rhododendron Shelter in Highland Park. Our activities for the day will continue the theme of exploring our ecological identity through crafts, movement, and discussion. Many of us have been craving time together in person and outdoors, so there will be a lot of time for fellowship and catching up with each other. A virtual option is available for those who are unable to attend in person.

Please RSVP to Kelli. More information will be sent out in the weeks to come regarding what to bring, meals, and other details.

### Are You Graduating?

Many people within our faith family will be graduating from high school, college, trade school, graduate school, etc. We would like to celebrate these achievements together!

If you're graduating, please submit your name, degree, and school attended to Megan Leisher at MeganL@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x122.

# club one sixteen notes

Join us for a series of celebrations as we begin this Easter season together. Our creative retelling of post-resurrection stories will include donuts, campfires, and walks in the great outdoors!

For more information, supplies, and Zoom links, contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

# YAMs, Join Our City Walks Group

Looking for an excuse to get out of the house? Join other young adults from across Pittsburgh for YAM City Walks! Grab your mask, walking shoes, and eager spirit, and meet us in a different park each month.

Contact Rebecca McGregor at mcgregorre8@gmail.com or 803.493.6394 for more information or to sign up.





# Taizé's Relaunch & Reimagining

On March 3, I met with our Taizé musicians, a few staff, and members to discuss relaunching Taizé virtually on our YouTube channel. That night, everyone was excited to be back in the space and begin thinking about moving forward. It was an energizing, creative, and hopeful conversation.

Many of us are seeing this time of COVID-19 dormancy from Taizé as an opportunity to reemerge with a new sense of imagination and creativity regarding how we lead our Taizé gatherings. Hopefully you participated in one of our pilot relaunch gatherings in March.

Moving forward, we will continue to experiment with making Taizé more interactive—engaging our bodies, hands, and feet—using different forms of praying—such as visual liturgies and guided meditations—all while drawing and building upon the foundation of Taizé's beautiful music, sung prayers, and contemplative space.

I also hope these new wrinkles will strengthen our Taizé service as a space of outreach for our neighbors and those who are seeking a safe, quiet place to belong, rest, meditate, and receive ELPC's radical welcome.

If helping us relaunch and reimagine Taizé is something that interests you, shoot me an email at **BJW@coh.net** and let's chat.

—BJ Woodworth

# **Spiritual Life**

The Rev. BJ Woodworth, Director of Spiritual Life Ministries

#### **Virtual Lenten Retreat**

Over February 19–20, about 30 of us spent 24 hours in solitude, reflection, and prayer in community with one another. We gathered around the Lenten theme of Jesus' 40 days in the desert, considering our belovedness, our own interior landscape, and what the Lenten desert is sifting and sorting in each of us. Here are reflections from two participants and some photos of Lenten altars that were created.





When you go into wild places, it's always good to go with a trusted guide and good companions. It's far more likely that you'll find what you've come for—even if you aren't sure, starting out, exactly what that is. And that's how it was for me, being led in my meditation by readings, prayerful activity and conversation with others.

As one of our readings suggested, the journey took me into "this place of starkness where I come to know the wildness within me." That's where I sat, getting better acquainted with those parts of myself, being visited by my personal temptations. And I learned that, in spite of those little devils, I was, indeed, beloved and surrounded by beloved others.

I thank Pastor BJ—our guide—and I thank my fellow travelers for helping me get to this clearer vision.

-John Benedict

Out in the wilderness, in the desert, there are many questions. The questions can be thorny and sharp with jagged edges—like the trees and rocks in the Burchfield painting that we used. I am drawn into the Lenten landscape to become more aware of the questions. The practice of solitude allows time for the questions to become more apparent.



My intention for Lent is to detach and downsize; remove some "things" from my home in order to make more room for questions and to free myself to receive God's graces, wisdom, and clarity about the journey. I trust that it's all a journey and that God can make use of any path. Time in solitude and the practice of detachment will create space in my heart and mind to listen to God.

-Rebecca, a new friend of ELPC

# **Presbyterian Women**



**PW Virtual Bible Study: God Laments** 

Mon., April 5 7–8:30 pm | Tues., April 6 10 am–12 pm How do you respond to an Almighty God who laments? Maybe, you recall Jesus weeping over Jerusalem because the people did not recognize him as the Son of God (Luke 19:41–44; Matthew 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35). In Hosea 11:1–9, God is a parent who can't bear to give up a child, even if the child causes God pain. God calls on us to hear divine laments, to remember our relationship and to act.

For more details, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

**Tues., April 20: Sharing Lament** *12–1 pm* We will continue discussing our lesson as we practice lament.

# **LGBTQ Ministry**

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry



**Sat., April 10: Spiritual Gathering** 10 am All allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are invited to our next monthly Spiritual Gathering! We will share meeting time and fellowship together via Zoom.

Contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x118 for more details or to attend

God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.

## **Archive 81 | Netflix Show Filmed at ELPC**

Over the first three months of 2021, ELPC hosted a Netflix crew as they filmed part of *Archive 81*—a new series based on a popular podcast of the same name.

Safety was paramount in planning how to welcome the crew into the church building. Aiming to keep both staffs safe, Netflix employees used parts of our building where ELPC staff members were not working, did not interact with ELPC staff, and stuck to a high standard of pandemic procedures—including frequent testing and PPE.

No release date for this new sci-fi/horror series has been announced quite yet. Stay tuned for updates.



## Hope Academy Teaching Artist Earns Residency

Dr. Brittany Trotter, a Hope Academy teaching artist and a renowned flutist, is one of two recipients of the inaugural *UniSound Black Teaching Artist-in-Residency Program*. Learn more at tiny.cc/brittany-trotter.



### **ELPC People**

If you have news to share, contact Megan Leisher at MeganL@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x122.

#### **Good News**

- Congratulations to Tommy and Laura (Hoehn) Trabold, little brother Caleb, and grandma Carol Hoehn, on the birth of Caiden Thomas Trabold.
- Please welcome our new member, Karen Overfield. Her last name was accidently misspelled in the March issue of Reaching Out.

#### **Prayers**

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

- Kitty Brunkhorst's husband, Bruce
- Carla Depperman's husband, Richard
- Joanne Goodall's brother
- Dan Ridley's father, Rev. Herman Ridley
- Whitney Solvay's father, Ken McWilliams





116 South Highland Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15206









"...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 Closure

on Mon., April 5, in observance of Easter.

### **Pastor Randy to Guest Preach**

On Good Friday, April 2, 12 pm, Pastor Randy will be a guest preacher as part of the "Seven Last Words" service at St. James AME Church. Pastor Randy will preach on the first word Jesus spoke from the cross, "Father, Forgive Them."

This special service will be available to livestream at Facebook.com/stjamesamepittsburgh.

# Addressing Local Diaper Need



12,000 diapers, over 13,000 wipes, and \$1,655.

Your generosity will help Pennsylvania keep babies

# **Summer Programming for Kids**

This summer, ELPC will not be offering a traditional Vacation Church School program. Rather, we will host a series of kid and family friendly events to help nurture our safe, gradual return to in-person ministry together.

Outdoor story-times, service-projects, games, and crafts together will reacquaint us with one another and remind us of the power of God's love.

Keep an eye out for upcoming events for children, youth and families with young kids. If you'd like to receive a direct email about any events for kids and families, please contact Pastor Heather to be included on our mailing list.

