

Get Ready for Rally Day

Plan to join us on **Rally Day, Sun., Sept. 12**, as we begin a new program year at ELPC. We will resume our two Sunday services, as well as Church School classes for persons of all ages. **club one sixteen** will begin later that week, Spiritual Life's meditation and prayer offerings will resume, and our Mission Ministry will launch a robust offering of programming.

As we plan for fall, we will be including both in-person and remote opportunities for learning, service, and fellowship—some of which will be happening concurrently, and some of which will be happening at different times. Registration forms will be available online by the end of August. One form can be completed to register for many of our programs at once!

As we head into a new season of shared ministry together, we will carefully be adapting our traditional protocols to create a safe and inclusive environment. Please check our website for updated information on ELPC's mask policy and safe use guidelines.

Church School Offering to Support the Navajo Water Project

Each year, the Faith Formation Ministries launch a church-wide mission initiative so that persons of all ages can come together to learn and serve our neighbors. Each participant in Church School—or our church life in general—is invited to participate in an offering. The proceeds go entirely to a mission partner whose work aligns with ELPC's larger sense of call.



As a Matthew 25 Church, the Faith Formation Board is pleased to invite our church family to support the important work of the Navajo Water Project—an organization working to bring clean, running water and solar power to Navajo families—30% of whom do not have access to clean, running water. To learn more about the Navajo Water Project, visit NavajoWaterProject.org.

You are invited to bring your donations—large and small—to Church School each week, or submit them online or by mail.

Sunday Service

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Summer Worship | 10 am

Aug. 1* Kathryn Ophardt
Aug. 8 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
Aug. 15 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
Aug. 22 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
Aug. 29 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Taizé Prayer Service

Wednesdays | 7 pm
Rev. BJ Woodworth

ELPC's Mask Policy

ELPC seeks to be a place of radical hospitality for all God's people. During this time of pandemic, the manner in which hospitality is lived out continues to change. While directives about mask-wearing vary from place to place, we seek to be a community where all people, especially the most vulnerable, can be safely welcomed. At ELPC:

- Mask wearing is optional for all fully vaccinated persons. People are always free to wear a mask while on church property.
- Mask wearing is required for all unvaccinated people/staff while on church property.
- Mask wearing is required for all volunteers/staff working indoors with unvaccinated children, regardless of vaccination status.
- We will continue our practice of allowing vaccinated preachers/singers/liturgists to not be masked while leading worship services, whether inside or outside.

Thank you for your patience and partnership as we continue to strive to be a faith community that is inclusive of all. Check for the latest updates at ELPC.church.

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

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Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor



Where do your emotions reside? Are they things in your head or things you feel in your heart and gut? For most of us, it is likely a combination of those two bodily locations. We feel “out of sorts,” depressed, or burdened and that manifests itself in drooping shoulders and a slouched physique—which then prompts us to think about why we feel that way and ponder this emotion in our head. Conversely, we feel “on top of the world,” happy, and exhilarated and that is evident by the spring in our step—which leads us to mentally list off why we are feeling so good so we can remember this special moment.

We commonly consider all our emotions to be deeply personal matters. We describe them using “first person” language: I feel happy, I feel sad, I’m frustrated, angry, or bored. But a recent article I read suggests that we should remember that emotions are actually social realities. They are responses to social interactions, not just private moods. For example, research has shown that you will laugh five times as often when you are with others as when you are alone. You may find pleasure in individual undertakings, but real experiences of joy and peak happiness mostly come from collective activity.

The sociologist Émile Durkheim coined the phrase “collective effervescence” to describe the energy and joy people discover when they come together around a shared purpose. I love the vivid imagery of that phrase, suggesting that like a bubbling glass of champagne, being together with others whom we enjoy causes happiness to bubble up within us in an effervescent way. The reporter writing about this (Adam Grant) described how this feeling can emerge when you join others in a line dance, when you’re energized by a positive brainstorming session with colleagues, when you’re among teammates on a soccer field, or beside friends at a religious service. As you can imagine, it was that last phrase that really caught my eye.

Over the past weeks, we have all been re-emerging from the Covid-pandemic. We know that some precautions are still in order and risks remain, but we have begun to meet together, eat out with friends, and even return to worship services. There are some anxieties to be confronted as we find our “comfort zones,” but the chance to shake someone’s hand or hug a family member after being apart for so long truly fills us with effervescent joy. Moments like that are part and parcel of when we worship together. Being able to sing a hymn and hear other voices around us or say the words of the Lord’s Prayer and do it in unison with others in the pews evokes a special emotional reverence that simply cannot be replicated alone at home.

Remember that most of the imperatives in the Bible are meant to be read as first-person plural. When the psalmist says, “Sing to the Lord a new song,” we are being invited to join our voices together in a type of “collective effervescence.” In the days ahead, seek out these moments of collective joy and shared happiness. Laugh, dance, sing, and yes, worship with others. Such is the way of our wonderful, shared faith.

Randy Bush

Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Tues.–Fri., Aug. 10–13: High School Mission Retreat

Youth who have completed grade 8 or higher are invited to join us for our High School Mission Retreat at Crestfield Camp in Slippery Rock. We'll enjoy a combination of service projects around the camp, worship and Bible study, and a lot of group fun after being apart for so long. We will be using Crestfield's space but planning our own schedule, meals, and worship. Register at ELPC.church or contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.



In July, youth in grades 6–8 spent time volunteering in our neighborhood, playing games, and sleeping in tents at our Middle School Mission Overnight.

Young Adult Ministry

Kelli Booher, Interim Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries

Fri., Aug. 20: Picklesburgh Party 6:30–8:30 pm

Picklesburgh—voted America's #1 Best Specialty Food Festival in America—is back! We will meet at a specified location downtown and then walk over to the festivities. We will walk through the festival, eat some pickles, and then enjoy a picnic, live music, and each other's company! Feel free to get dressed up, but let's all wear green for fun (and great photo ops). Taking the bus or carpooling is encouraged. Please sign up with Kelli Booher at KelliB@coh.net.

Sat., Aug. 28: Coal Tubin' in Johnstown 9 am–7 pm

As summer winds down, let's venture out of Pittsburgh for some relaxing fun. YAMs will enjoy floating down The Stonycreek in inner tubes. We will leave around 9 am, float, eat dinner at a local favorite, and then return to Pittsburgh around 7 pm. The cost is \$15/person (\$20 if you'd like an upgraded inner tube). Scholarships are available. Please bring money for dinner.

There are many more details you need to know, so please contact Kelli Booher at KelliB@coh.net if you would like to go or if you have questions! And let Kelli know if you're interested in riding in the church van, carpooling, or meeting us there.

Subscribe to YAM text alerts by texting "YAM" to 412.612.2594. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram at [@elpcyoungadults](https://www.instagram.com/elpcyoungadults).

Parents, Your Input is Important

To best serve families with children of all ages, we have posted a survey online. We would like your feedback regarding your comfort and hopes for programming tailored toward children and youth, as well as how to effectively and safely include unvaccinated children in worship.

Parents, please complete the survey at tiny.cc/elpc-parent-survey.

Summer Kids' Ministry

Join us on **Sun., Aug. 22, 2:30 pm**, for our final summer event. We will explore the theme of *Sanctuary* as a gift we give to our neighbors. Register online at ELPC.church.



Teen Volunteers Needed

It's not too late to volunteer for the Summer Kids Ministry event on **Sun., Aug. 22**. After the event, teen volunteers will go swimming at Highland Park until 6 pm. Sign up online or by emailing Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.



Soul Food Class Holds Last Summer Session

Join us via Zoom on **Sun., Aug. 22**, 8:45 am, as we conclude our discussion of *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit*, by Yolanda Pierce, with chapter 12.

A weekday make-up session will be scheduled for those who cannot participate that Sunday.

For more information, contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu at hajdu625@comcast.net.

2021 CONSPIRE Conference Simulcast

Over the weekend of **Sept. 24–26**, the Spiritual Life Committee invites you to a virtual simulcast of the Center for Action and Contemplation's CONSPIRE Conference, *Me/Us/the World: Living Inside God's Great Story*.



In this time of great unknowing, how do we expand our sense of self to include love, healing, and forgiveness—not just for ourselves and those like us, but for the entire world? Join spiritual seekers across the world for an interactive, global gathering to experience God's love, grace, and compassion. Presenters include James Finley, Barbara Holmes, Jacqui Lewis, Brian McLaren, Richard Rohr, and Mirabai Starr.

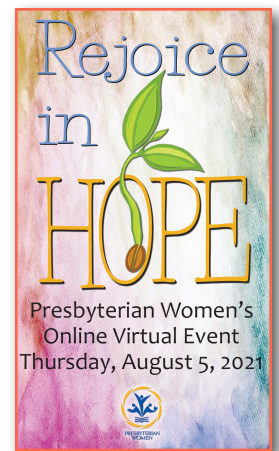
Learn more at cac.org/conspire-2021.

Presbyterian Women

Thurs., Aug. 5: PW Gathering | Rejoice in Hope 4–6 pm

Join Presbyterian Women from Maine to Hawaii for an online gathering. Our theme, "Rejoice in Hope," is based on Romans 12:12–13. The Rev. Dr. Dianne Moffett will offer a message of hope, and Irene Pak Lee, associate pastor at Stone Church in Willow Glen, Pennsylvania, will deliver the keynote address. In addition, Bible study authors, present and future, will introduce their studies.

Come prepared to be renewed and inspired. The event will be livestreamed on Presbyterian Women's Facebook page, and an in-person watch party will be held at ELPC. For more info, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

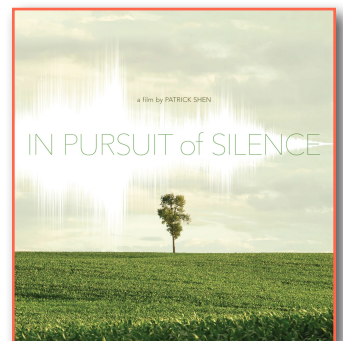


Spiritual Life

The Rev. BJ Woodworth, Director of Spiritual Life Ministries

Sat., Aug. 14: In Pursuit of Silence | Film Viewing and Conversation 7–9 pm

In Pursuit of Silence is a documentary that meditatively explores our relationship with silence, sound, and the impact of noise on our lives. Beginning with an ode to John Cage's groundbreaking composition, *4'33"*, the film takes us on an immersive cinematic journey around the globe—from a traditional tea ceremony in Kyoto, to the streets of the loudest city on the planet, Mumbai, during the wild festival season—and inspires us to experience silence and celebrate the wonders of our world. RSVP to Norma Meyer by **Fri., Aug. 13**.



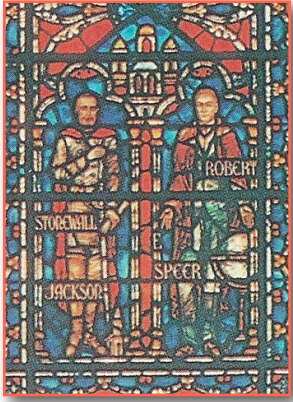
Walking the Butler-Freeport Community Trail

On **Sat., July 10**, 11 ELPC folks walked silently in the beauty and grandeur of God's creation along the Butler-Freeport Community Trail. While not many words were spoken, we experienced a deep joy and connection with one another, being together face-to-face and in the flesh. We wandered together along the trail with our hearts, minds, and spirits attuned to the beck and call of nature pouring forth her speech in birds, daddy longlegs, brooks, fallen trees, rocks, moss, sun, shade, and the stillness of the day.



Pictured: Jeff Parsons, Joe Hajdu, Beverly Harris Schenz, Carol Mullen, Reed Williams, Carla Depperman, Nate Stevens, Sally Jo, Rev. BJ Woodworth, and Bobby Egleston (not pictured).

Stonewall Jackson Window Updates



At February's congregational meeting, Pastor Randy called our attention to the presence of a stained-glass window honoring Stonewall Jackson, a Confederate general, located in the History of Presbyterianism window in the east transept of ELPC's Sanctuary. In the window, Jackson is depicted in a Confederate soldier's uniform and holding a sword. ELPC commissioned the window during the first half of the twentieth century, a time when—well after the end of the Civil War—huge numbers of Confederate monuments were being erected nationwide in a revisionist-history effort to glorify Confederates as cultural heroes, rather than violent defenders of white supremacist ideology.

In an effort to seek a faithful and robust response to this problematic symbol of white supremacy—and to other troubling aspects of our church's history with regard to racial justice—the ELPC Session created a task force comprised of representatives from the Peace, Property, and Facing Systemic Racism Committees, as well as volunteers from the congregation. For several months, the task force has prayed, researched, and deliberated about how to address the window and the larger issues it represents, understanding that a faithful response cannot simply be to erase them from our history or collective memories. We seek to meaningfully respond—with justice and faithfulness—to a range of ways that ELPC has participated with white supremacy; for instance, the church building stands on ancestral lands of multiple Native nations, and the church has often benefited from inequitably-applied government policy.

The task force will soon offer its recommendations for action, repentance, and education to the ELPC Session, and also hopes to engage the congregation in conversation and action. Please stay tuned for more updates and the opportunity to be involved!

Café Justo Sales Resume

We're excited to announce that Café Justo will resume sales on the second Sunday of each month. Coffee is \$10 per bag for Robusta, Arabica, 50/50 Arabica/Robusta blend, Decaf Arabica. All varieties are typically available in ground and whole bean. Stop by the coffee cart in the Narthex following worship on **Sun., Aug. 8**. If you are unable to pick up your coffee in person, please contact Ryan Booher at rabooherco@gmail.com to make alternate arrangements.



Café Justo sales at ELPC began after a number of members participated in mission trips to Frontera de Cristo, a United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America cross-border mission program in Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Mexico. Sales benefit the growers, their employees, and their communities by providing sustainable incomes, building schools and health centers, and reducing migration northward.

ELPC Session News

At the recent Session meeting, the ELPC Elders:

- Received a positive financial report for 2021 and recommended reducing our dependence on our endowment in the 2022 budget.
- Continued to modify the *Safer Use Guidelines* as the building slowly reopens to the public.
- Received an update from the taskforce studying the Stonewall Jackson stained glass window.
- Heard committee reports from the Faith Formation Board, Personnel, and Membership & Outreach.

ELPC People

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

Good News

- Congratulations to **Christine DeAndrea** and **Matthew Roth** who were married at ELPC on July 4.
- Congratulations to those in our faith family who recently celebrated their baptism:
 - **Lily Maria Sue Curtice**, daughter of Michael J. Van Stipdonk and Stephanie Sue Curtice
 - Confirmands **Boaz Chapman**, **Annabelle Degenholtz**, and **Ian Kuchera**

Prayers

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

- Judy Sue Wolfson, partner of Robert Shepherd
- Nancy Latshaw, wife of Bill Latshaw

“...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

The ELPC building will be closed on **Mon., Sept. 6**, in observance of Labor Day.



LGBTQ Ministry to Host Spiritual Gathering

All LGBTQIA+ folks and allies are welcome to attend our next Spiritual Gathering, either in person or via Zoom, on **Sun., Aug. 15**, 11:30 am. For more details, please contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x118.

**God Created You. God Loves You.
Be Yourself.**

Seeking Garden Stewards

Are you inspired by God's beautiful creation? If so, we are seeking volunteers to serve as independent garden stewards. Simply stop by the ELPC gardens and spend some time weeding. You may come as little or as often as you'd like, and stay as long as you are able. Even 30 minutes helps! Please bring garden work gloves, a small weeding tool, and water. Let us know if you need any other supplies!

Sign up at tiny.cc/garden-stewards. Contact Megan Leisher at MeganL@coh.net with any questions.



Rehearsals Resume in September

ELPC's Music Ministry will resume a regular rehearsal schedule in September. If you are interested in singing or ringing, please contact Dr. Ed at EdM@coh.net.