

### 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)

### TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 15, 2021 — 10 AM SUMMER WORSHIP

**GATHERING MUSIC** 

HYMN #37 HYMN #406 (sing 3x; on back pg)

HYMN #408

"Let All Things Now Living"
"We Are Standing on Holy Ground"
"There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit"

ASH GROVE HOLY GROUND SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

**SHARING GOD'S PEACE** 

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

People: Y también contigo.

The Rev. Schoenewolf

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Diane Flaherty

Leader: I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me.

People: Incline your ear to me and hear my prayers and supplications.

Leader: Show me your unfailing loving-kindness; protect me beneath the shadow of your wings.

People: For though the wicked surround me and have closed their hearts to pity, you are my rock

and my redeemer.

Leader: Together let us worship our God in spirit, in truth, and in joy!

\* HYMN #645 (vs. 1, 2, 4)

"Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above"

MIT FREUDEN ZART

Sing praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation,

The God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation.

With healing balm my soul is filled, and every faithless murmur stilled:

To God all praise and glory!

What God's almighty power has made God's gracious mercy keepeth; By morning glow or evening shade God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth.

Within the kingdom of God's might, lo! all is just and all is right:

To God all praise and glory!

Thus all my toilsome way along I sing aloud thy praises,

That all may hear the grateful song my voice unwearied raises.

Be joyful in the Lord, my heart; both soul and body, take your part:

To God all praise and glory!



#### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

Merciful God, we confess that we have not been faithful children. We have not lived by your law; we have remained silent in the face of evil; we have not spoken the truth or pursued the ways of peace. You offer your holy wisdom to us, but we have rejected your gift and failed to walk in the ways of the righteous. Forgive us our sin, O God. Lead us to sincere repentance through Jesus Christ. Hear now our silent prayers of confession.

TIME OF SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel.

People: En Jesucristo tenemos perdón! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

¡Alabado sea Dios! Praise God!

**HYMN #770** (vs. 1, 3, 4; remain seated)

WELCOME TABLE

"I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table"

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table; I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, Alleluia. I'm gonna eat at the welcome table; I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, Alleluia.

I'm gonna join with sisters, brothers; I'm gonna join with sisters, brothers, Alleluia. I'm gonna join with sisters, brothers; I'm gonna join with sisters, brothers, Alleluia.

Here all the world will find a welcome; here all the world will find a welcome, Alleluia. Here all the world will find a welcome; here all the world will find a welcome, Alleluia.

#### HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Esther 2:5-10, 16-23

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

Now there was a Jew in the citadel of Susa whose name was Mordecai son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, a Benjaminite. 6 Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with King Jeconiah of Judah, whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away. 7 Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his cousin, for she had neither father nor mother; the girl was fair and beautiful, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter. 8 So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in the citadel of Susa in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. 9 The girl pleased him and won his favor, and he quickly provided her with her cosmetic treatments and her portion of food, and with seven chosen maids from the king's palace, and advanced her and her maids to the best place in the harem. 10 Esther did not reveal her people or kindred, for Mordecai had charged her not to tell.

When Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, 17 the king loved Esther more than all the other women; of all the virgins she won his favor and devotion, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18 Then the king gave a great banquet to all his officials and ministers—"Esther's banquet." He also granted a holiday to the provinces, and gave gifts with royal liberality.

19 When the virgins were being gathered together, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. 20 Now Esther had not revealed her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had charged her; for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him. 21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus. 22 But the matter came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. 23 When the affair was investigated and found to be so, both the men were hanged on the gallows. It was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

<sup>\*</sup> Indicates where to please rise in body or spirit.

#### TIME FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Rev. Schoenewolf

\* HYMN #750

"Goodness Is Stronger Than Evil"

GOODNESS IS STRONGER

Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate; Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death. Victory is ours; victory is ours through God who loves us.

#### HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Proverbs 31:10-12

The Rev. Dr. Bush

A capable wife who can find?

She is far more precious than jewels.

The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.

She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

#### PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

The Rev. Dr. Bush

**SERMON** "A Tale of Three Banquets – Esther part 2"

The Rev. Dr. Bush

#### TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Kathryn Ophardt

#### **OFFERING INVITATION**

Kathryn Ophardt

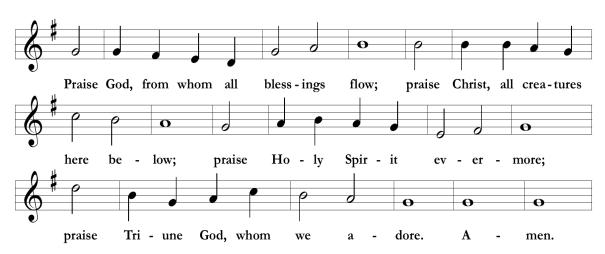
We offer our gifts in response to God's love, and the grace of Jesus Christ, which we seek to make known through the ministries of this congregation. Please visit www.ELPC.church/donate if you would like to make a contribution, or leave your donation in the collection box in the Courtyard.

**ANTHEM** 

"Praise His Holy Name!"

Keith Hampton

#### \* DOXOLOGY OLD HUNDREDTH



#### \* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION

The Rev. Dr. Bush Kathryn Ophardt

Leader:El Señor esté con ustedes.The Lord be with you.People:Y también contigo.And also with you.Leader:Levantemos nuestros corazones.Lift up your hearts.

People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor. We lift them up to the Lord.

<sup>\*</sup> Indicates where to please rise in body or spirit.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor Let us give thanks to the Lord

nuestro Dios. our God.

People: Es justo dar gracias y

It is right to give God

alabanzas a Dios. thanks and praise.

Leader: Loving God, with joyful hearts we offer ourselves and our gifts to you. They are found in tithes,

offerings, and pledges. They are found in prayers and acts of devotion. They are found in moments of kindness and speaking up for justice. Bless them all by your grace that they be used

for the glory of your realm. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

\* CLOSING HYMN #100 (vs. 1, 2, 3)

"My Soul Cries Out"

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, And your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; There are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

**CHARGE & BENEDICTION** 

The Rev. Dr. Bush



## PARTICIPANTS IN WORSHIP TODAY

Preaching: The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush

Liturgists: The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Kathryn Ophardt Diane Flaherty

Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore,

Organist/Music Director
ELPC Summer Choir

A/V: Tim Benedict

Wayne Gaines

As part of ELPC's mission to extend radical hospitality to all, our full worship service is also 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 or put your donation in the donation box in the Courtyard.

<sup>\*</sup> Indicates where to please rise in body or spirit.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### ELPC's Mask Policy (effective 08.06.21)

We seek to be a place of radical hospitality for all of God's people. 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.

We are encouraged by increasing rates of vaccination in our area, but there are still many members of our community who cannot be vaccinated (due to age and/or compromised immune system).

- During this recent period of increased Covid-19 cases in Allegheny County, we are requiring masks to be worn while on church property 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 full observance of these updated policies.

#### **LGBTQ Ministry's Spiritual Gathering**

Today at 11:30 am

You are invited to the next spiritual gathering of ELPC's LGBTQ Ministry today at 11:30 am as we share food and fellowship at the church. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are welcome. Contact Wil Forrest for more info and/or to attend (Wil@coh.net).

#### Café Justo Sales Resume

Second Sunday of each month

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. If you are unable to pick up your coffee in person, please contact Ryan Booher (rabooherco@gmail.com) to make alternate arrangements.

#### Taizé Services in Sanctuary

Wednesdays at 7 pm
Our weekly Taizé
prayer service will
gather in the
Sanctuary on
Wednesdays at 7 pm.
In-person attendance
is welcome, and no
pre-registration is
necessary.



#### **Garden Stewards Needed**

Day and time at your convenience! We are seeking volunteer Garden Stewards to weed independently in the ELPC gardens. Once you sign up online at signupgenius.com/go/9040849ACAD29A0FE3-garden, Megan will contact you. You can come as little or as often as you'd like. Even 30 minutes helps! Contact Megan with any questions (MeganL@coh.net).

#### **Soul Food Summer Classes Conclude**

Sunday, Aug 22 at 8:45 am Join us as we conclude our disc

Join us as we conclude our discussion of *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit* by Yolanda Pierce. We will discuss chapter 12 on Sunday, Aug 22 on Zoom at 8:45 am. For info, contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu (hajdu625@comcast.net).

#### **Summer Kids' Ministry**

Sunday, Aug 22 at 2:30 pm

Join 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 Sunday, Aug 22. After the event, teen volunteers will go swimming at Highland Park until 6 pm. Sign up online or by emailing Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

#### **Young Adult Ministry**

Friday, 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
(KelliB@coh.net).

Saturday, 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.

#### Get Ready for Rally Day

Plan to join us on Rally Day Sunday, 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.



# CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATIONS CONSPIRE CONFERENCE

**September 24-26, 2021** 

A VIRTUAL SIMULCAST EVENT AT ELPC

### Me / Us / the World Living Inside God's Great Story

Over the weekend of September 24–26, the Spiritual Life Committee invites you to join us in person at ELPC, for 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.

- Participate in contemplative sits led by Fr. Richard Rohr each morning.
- Connect with other participants around the globe and at ELPC.
- Deepen your experience with presentations, workshops, and book talks.

Learn about opportunities to nourish your path of transformation and live into new ways of thinking and being.

Please join us in-person for free at ELPC! Pastor BJ will stream the conference in the McKelvy Room. You are welcome to join us for any or all of the conference. Please indicate the day(s) you will attend. Lunch will be provided each day.

#### Our schedule is as follows:

- Friday, September 24 | 10 am–6 pm
- Saturday, September 25 | 10 am–6 pm
- Sunday, September 26 | 12:30 pm-6 pm

Please fill out the registration form by Sunday, September 19 at www.ELPC.church.

Learn more at cac.org/conspire-2021.

#### #37—LET ALL THINGS NOW LIVING



#### #408—THERE'S A SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT



This gospel hymn grew out of this African American author and composer's intense experience of prayer with her interracial choir in Los Angeles one Sunday morning before worship. She recalled that sense of "a sweet, sweet Spirit" when she sat down at her piano the next day.



## #645—SING PRAISE TO GOD WHO REIGNS ABOVE (vs. 1, 2, 4)



The regal divine imagery here will not be new to most singers, but some may not expect the third stanza's image of God as mother. Yet it is part of God's self-description in Isaiah 66:13. This Bohemian Brethren tune resembles both Genevan psalm tunes and French folk songs.



## #770—I'M GONNA EAT AT THE WELCOME TABLE (vs. 1, 3, 4)



The image of a great feast showing God's welcome of all people was part of Jewish tradition (Isaiah 25:6–9) and underlies Jesus' parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15–24). Such equality remains as unknown to many people today as it was to the slaves who created this spiritual.

#### #750—GOODNESS IS STRONGER THAN EVIL



Recognizing that this text arose from the years of apartheid in South Africa adds depth and resonance to its already confident language. Yet these words can also be read as a summary of Christ's death and resurrection, the true basis of our hope that good will triumph over evil.

## #100—MY SOUL CRIES OUT WITH A JOYFUL SHOUT (vs. 1, 2, 3)



By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46–55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.

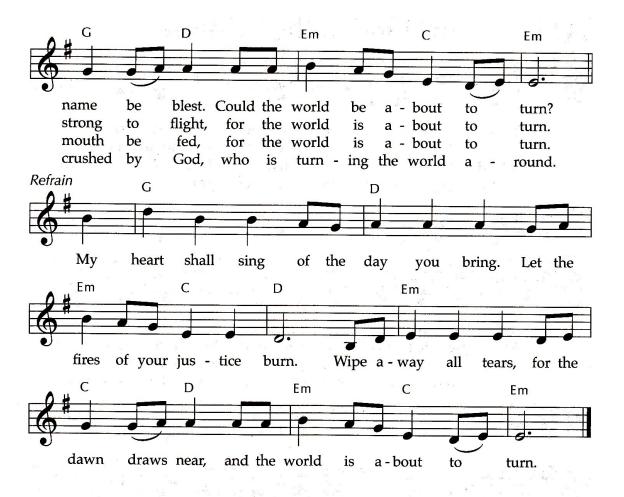
nev - er earn; there are

prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and

they can

ta - bles spread; ev - ery

can be



## #406—We Are Standing on Holy Ground (sing 3x)



The phrase "holy ground" resonates with the experience of Moses at the burning bush, where he had an encounter with God (Exodus 3:5; also quoted in the martyr Stephen's sermon, Acts 7:33). The reference to angels may recall Jacob's vision (Genesis 28:12–17) or Hebrews 12:22.