

## A Conversation on Critical Race Theory



One of the Facing Systemic Racism Committee's roles is to inform the congregation of current issues regarding race. This month, we are pleased to present an online conversation on Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has come to the forefront of the racial issues in our country. We will provide an opportunity to learn more about the origin of CRT, what it is, and how it became such an issue—especially in K–12 education.

On **Sun., Oct. 17**, 12:30 pm, we are honored to have a keynote speaker, Dr. James Phillip Huguley, associate dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and associate professor at the School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh, and a panel of our own ELPC educators who represent early childhood through higher education. They will discuss what CRT is, what it is not, and what the implications are for public school education. The keynote and the panel will be followed by a Q&A session.

More information and registration details are available at [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church). We look forward to your participation.



## What Role Do Educators Play in Affirming Racial Identity?

Critical Race Theory in schools is a hot-button topic today. Not long ago, it was bussing Black kids into white neighborhoods. Before that, it was school segregation. The topics of race and education are—and have always been—inextricably intertwined. So, let's talk about it! Let's discuss the connections. Let's discuss the problems. And let's discuss the future and how to make it better.

Join the Facing Systemic Racism Committee during the Church School hour on **Sun., Oct. 31**, for an intergenerational conversation through story. Dr. Beverly Harris-Schenz will share a personal vignette that addresses the intersection of race and education. Dr. Linda Lane will help facilitate a discussion about why this personal recollection from Dr. Harris-Schenz's youth is relevant to each of us today.

If you are interested in learning more about racial identity in the classroom from the lived perspective of Dr. Beverly Harris-Schenz, please register to join the Facing Systemic Racism Committee for this vignette on race.

## Sunday Services

*\*Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

### Journey Worship | 8:45 am

*Theme: Reimagine*

Oct. 3\* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf  
 Oct. 10 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
 Oct. 17 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
 Oct. 24 Rev. BJ Woodworth  
 Oct. 31 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

### Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

Oct. 3\* Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
 Oct. 10 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
 Oct. 17 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
 Oct. 24 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush  
 Oct. 31 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

## Taizé Prayer Service

*Wednesdays | 7 pm*

Rev. BJ Woodworth

## Worship in October

Join us at Sanctuary worship for special times of remembrance, celebration, and worship!

- On **World Communion Sunday, Oct. 3**, we will recognize those who have been members of ELPC for 50 or more years, as well as remember the ministry and legacy of Rev. Dr. Robert Hewett, who was pastor of ELPC from 1981–1985.
- On **Oct. 17**, we will celebrate the many new members who have joined ELPC in the past 20 months, and welcome musical guest Mike Tomaro, director of jazz music studies at Duquesne University.
- On **Oct. 24**, we will acknowledge the couples who were joined in matrimony during the past 20 months, and offer a chance for all those in committed, loving relationships to renew their vows.
- As part of our All Saints' Day service on **Oct. 31**, we will remember those in our congregation and larger church family who have passed away since January 2020.

## East Liberty Presbyterian Church

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## Pastoral Message

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



In telling the story of Jesus' life and death, it had to be awkward to acknowledge that Peter, the lead disciple, publicly disowned Christ in a moment of weakness. Or that another of the select followers, Judas, literally plotted and facilitated the arrest and eventual crucifixion of his faith leader. But in actuality, it is precisely the inclusion of these awkward moments involving the doubting, dense, and disastrous acts of the disciples that make the bible accounts of Jesus so compelling. It is the honesty of the gospels telling about the failings of Jesus' disciples that encourages

us to trust these biblical authors when we read "the rest of the story." Those who didn't hide the ugly truth of denial and betrayal can now be seen as reliable witnesses to the amazing truth of resurrection and renewal after Easter.

One day this past summer I was waiting for Beth when I started reading an out-of-date Smithsonian magazine that happened to be in the waiting room. The lead article was titled "The Lost History of Yellowstone." Its subtitle was "Debunking the Myth that the Great National Park was a Wilderness Untouched by Humans." I realized that I had blithely accepted the false American myth that when our national parks were created, they were pristine and unpopulated lands out West thankfully preserved by federal acts of conservation. But Doug McDonald, a professor of anthropology and historian about the Native American presence in the national parks, was quoted as saying, "Pretty much anywhere you'd want to pitch a tent, there are Native American artifacts. Like us, they liked to camp on flat ground, close to water, with a beautiful view." McDonald is quick to hold up the brochure given to every visitor of Yellowstone that says, "when you watch animals here, you glimpse the world as it was before humans." Then, with a wry grin, McDonald goes on to say, "I guess the marketing hasn't caught up with the research," since there is plenty of evidence of human activity in the parks since the time of mammoths and mastodons.

Much would be lost in the Christian story if we were denied the witness of Peter's flaws and Judas' misguided betrayal. We would miss seeing ourselves in the story, with our own sins and struggling efforts to believe faithfully, and we would lose the heart of the gospel that triumphs despite Judas and prospers under the leadership of a contrite-yet-redeemed Peter or a repentant Apostle Paul. In the same way, erasing the presence of Native Americans from the panoramic views of the national parks lessens the power of what we see. It turns a thousand-year shared history into a much shorter timeline lacking cultural richness and potential connections to those who walked the land long before our arrival.

During the month of October, there will be numerous opportunities for us to "fill in the gaps" in our cultural story—to reflect on our global identity on World Communion, to stand up for justice as we commission our Facing Systemic Racism committee, and to participate in Critical Race conversations that shine light on racist parts of our past too long hidden away. All of this belongs as part of our story. Only by listening, telling, reflecting on the full story can we come to appreciate its truth and saving power. And doing such work is the desire of our Savior, who calls us to break our silences and step forward, together, by faith. Thanks be to God!

*Randy Bush*

# Mission Matters

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

## Facing Systemic Racism | From Taskforce to Committee

In 2017, the Mission Board established the Facing Systemic Racism Task Force. For the past four years, volunteers studied, researched, and presented opportunities for congregants to sit at the table and ask hard questions about how we as a country, city, body of believers, and individuals participate in and support racist structures that maintain the status quo of white supremacy, implicit bias, and white privilege.

A task force is generally short lived. Goals are achieved and the task force disbands. As we well know, eradicating racism within ourselves and our structures is a life-long journey of self reflection and examination. After prayerful consideration and conversation, the Mission Board, under the auspice of church leadership, has elected to transform the Facing Systemic Racism Task Force to a standing committee of ELPC. This may seem like word play to some, but establishing a standing committee acknowledges that facing systemic racism is critical to the life and well being of our congregation, to who we profess to be, and to our commitment to being a diverse, equitable and inclusive body.

The new Facing Systemic Racism Committee will be commissioned during Sanctuary worship on **Sun., Oct. 10.**

## ELPC Session News

At its recent meeting, the Session:

- Celebrated the 2021 Stewardship Campaign kickoff and its theme, *Go as God Leads.*
- Voted on recommendations from the Stonewall Jackson Window Task Force related to its possible removal. (Due to printing deadlines, the results will be reported in next month's issue.)
- Reviewed the effectiveness of current in-person and remote worship, educational, and mission activities.
- Heard about additional spotlights being installed in the Sanctuary to illuminate the chancel steps.

## Dear Siblings in Christ

Sometimes it feels like the world is coming at us so quickly that we don't know which way to turn, where to look, what to do next. In a chaotic world, we find strength in knowing that God is always near. That is why we are grateful for a season of coming together as a diverse community, mutually seeking peace, justice, and equity for all of God's people. This season culminates on **World Communion Sunday, Oct. 3,** when we receive the Peace & Global Witness Offering.

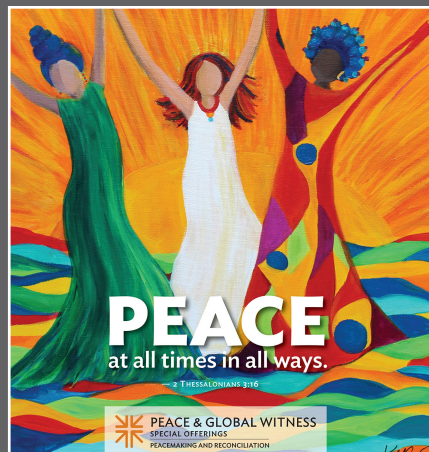
The Peace & Global Witness Offering draws Presbyterians together and provides education and exposure to those who show us how to do this work well. Some of the missions made possible by the offering include supporting church partners in Lebanon recovering from trauma after a bombing in Beirut; helping congregations address the growing mental health crisis and the increasing number of suicides in their communities. And this offering made it possible for the whole church to come

together to support a peacemaking travel study to the U.S.-Mexico border, where participants got learned about the difficult life for many people in Central America and Mexico who are fleeing from poverty and violence.

As Presbyterians and a Matthew 25 church, we give because we know that every level of society is in need of Christ's peace, justice, and equity—at all times, in all ways. Our prayers

for peace and work for justice will be joined with this offering to make a difference throughout the world. ELPC will retain 25% of this offering to support the ministry of our newly organized Facing Systemic Racism Committee. Another 25% will be retained by mid councils to support peacemaking efforts being pursued by our neighboring congregations. And the remaining 50% will be deployed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to join the peacemaking efforts of church partners all over the globe. Learn more at [PresbyterianMission.org/peace-global](https://www.PresbyterianMission.org/peace-global).

The ELPC Mission Board and committees challenge each of us to consider how we might increase our witness and our giving. And we pray that the God of peace might open our hearts to join with Christians everywhere at the Lord's Table on **World Communion Sunday, Oct. 3,** and respond generously to the Peace & Global Witness Offering.





# Christian Education

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf, Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries

**Note:** Adult classes meet in person and via Zoom on Sundays, 9:45 am.

## Journey with Scripture

Facilitators: Lora Bethea and Jan Lyle Irvin

"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you."  
—Luke 6:27

Our focus on the *P's and Q's of Scripture* continues with readings from the Psalms, the prophets, Paul's letters, and Q (sayings of Jesus from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew).

**Oct. 3:** Psalm 141; Amos 3:12–4:3; Luke (Q) 6:27–36  
(*Love Your Enemies; Renouncing One's Own Rights; The Golden Rule; Impartial Love; Being Full of Compassion Like God*); Galatians 2:11–14

**Oct. 10:** Psalm 115; Amos 5:18–25; Luke (Q) 6:37–42  
(*Not Judging; The Sightless Leading the Sightless; The Disciple and the Teacher; The Speck and the Beam*); Galatians 2:15–21

**Oct. 17:** Psalm 128; Amos 5:18–25; Luke (Q) 6:43–45  
(*The Tree is Known by Its Fruit*); Galatians 3:1–5

**Oct. 24:** Psalm 134; Amos 6:11–14; Luke (Q) 6:46–49  
(*Not Just Saying Master, Master; Houses Built on Rock or on Sand*); Galatians 3:6–26

## Parenting Circle

Facilitator: Trish Buben

### October: The Sandbox Revolution

This fall, we will be discussing *The Sandbox Revolution: Raising Kids for a Just World*. This collection of essays and discussion questions invites parents to call upon their collective wisdom to "wrestle with the questions, navigate the challenges, offer concrete practices, and remind parents of the sacredness of the works. Written by parents who also are writers, pastors, teachers, organizers, artists, gardeners, and activists, this anthology offers diverse experiences on topics that include education, money, anti-racism, resistance, spirituality, disability justice, and Earth care."

## Soul Food

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

### October: No Other Gods

We will be reading and discussing the introduction and first three chapters of *No Other Gods: The Politics of the Ten Commandments*, by Ana Levy-Lyons. New participants are always welcome! For details, contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu at [hajdu625@comcast.net](mailto:hajdu625@comcast.net).

## Seekers

Facilitator: Gwen Puza | [gpuza9@gmail.com](mailto:gpuza9@gmail.com)

### Oct. 3: Welcoming Afghan Refugees to Pittsburgh

Afghan refugees are front page news now, but Jewish Family & Community Services of Pittsburgh has a long history of welcoming refugee families. Brenda Lee Green, program supervisor of JFCS Refugee & Immigrant Services, will join us to review the U.S. refugee resettlement program, the cost of refugee resettlement in comparison to the economic and cultural gains to the community, and the context of "welcoming the refugee" in the Abrahamic religions.

### Oct. 10: The Navajo Water & Appalachia Project

Economical, environmental, and racial injustices over the years have perpetuated limited or no access to fresh running water for some in the U.S. This year's Church School offering will support the Navajo Water Project. Kelli Booher will discuss this project, which brings water to the Navajo and other tribes, as well as to people in Appalachia, helping them make changes in their communities.

### Oct. 17: Welcoming the Stranger

Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden is a national organization of volunteers that meet asylum seekers at bus stations as they travel from the U.S./Mexico border to their sponsors. Like the Underground Railroad, it informs teams from city to city of the needs of incoming migrants. Volunteers help them understand their tickets, as well as give them food, drink, needed toiletries, etc. Most of the migrants do not speak English. The Grannies are looking for volunteers in Pittsburgh to meet buses at the Greyhound Bus Terminal. Join us to learn more.

### Oct. 24: AJAPO Refugee Resettlement in Pittsburgh

Since 2001, Acculturation for Justice, Access, and Peace Outreach (AJAPO) has implemented service coordination programs for refugees/immigrants through training for acculturation, life skills, leadership/conflict resolution skills, counseling, support, and referrals for access to education, housing, medical, and welfare benefits, as well as legal services. AJAPO in Pittsburgh is now receiving Afghan refugees. Learn more with us.



# Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Education & Youth Ministry



**Sun., Oct. 3: Pizza and Kickball** 12:30–2:30 pm  
Youth in grades 6–12 will get together for pizza and kickball at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. We will be walking from ELPC to PTS at 12:10 pm. RSVP to Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net) is required.

**Sat., Oct. 23: Helping with Yard Work** 10 am–1:30 pm  
Youth in grades 6–12 will help some church members get things done around their yards! Sign up with Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net).

# Young Adult Ministry

Kelli Booher, Interim Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries

## Fri.–Sun., Nov. 5–7: YAM “Champing” Fall Retreat

You may have heard of “glamping,” but this year’s retreat is unique in that it is “champing”—camping at a church that is no longer used for services. We will travel outside of Pittsburgh to a historic church built in 1903. We will have access



to the main sanctuary, balcony, kitchen, and yes, it does have hot showers! Tents, camping mats, and/or cots are provided, but you may bring your own. There is more than 3,000 square feet of space, so plenty of room for us to spread out.

The cost is **\$30/person** (scholarships are available). Contact Kelli Booher at [kellib@coh.net](mailto:kellib@coh.net) to receive more details about this retreat. RSVP by **Fri., Oct. 29**.

# Confirmation Class

Our Confirmation Class will meet on **Sun., Oct. 17**, 12:30–3:30 pm. Contact Pastor Heather or Sara Hackett for more information.

## club one sixteen

This year, kids in grades 1–12 are welcome to join us on Wednesdays from 4:30–6:30 pm. We will meet outside this fall, and so our theme for the year will be **inside out**.

Through Bible study, art, recreation, and discussion, we will explore all the ways in which God shows up when our world is turned **inside out**.

Register online or at the church. Masks are required.



# YAM Fall Series | Exploring Taizé

All young adults are invited to join us on **Tues., Oct. 12 and 26** 6:30–8 pm, as we begin our fall series to learn about, discuss, and attend Taizé prayer services. ELPC’s Taizé service is based on a style of worship developed at the Taizé community in France in the 1940s by the late Brother Roger. Come explore as we collectively learn and discuss what Taizé is, its roots, and how we can implement it into the ways we practice our faith. We will use a variety of texts, stories, and images, and welcome a couple speakers. No prerequisites are needed. Come to one or come to all, just come as you are!

# Experiencing Taizé

Young adults will attend Taizé together on **Wed., Oct. 6 and 20**, 7 pm, as a part of our fall series exploring Taizé. Following the service, you are welcome to gather with us outside of the church building for fellowship and reflection.

## Experience Creation Spirituality at Garfield Community Farm

The mission of Garfield Community Farm (GCF) is to provide fresh produce and educational opportunities to our community, as well as to demonstrate God's restoration of creation through urban agriculture. GCF also exists as a natural monastery that invites us into a conversation, a dance with creation—the Earth, “the Original Cathedral.”

The Spiritual Life Committee and the Environmental Team of the Justice Committee invite you to at GCF (509 Wicklow St.) on **Sat., Oct. 9**, 9–11 am. Stephanie and Kevin Bell, [philoxenialife.com](http://philoxenialife.com), will introduce us to GCF and invite us to encounter the wisdom of the trees, ingest the healing powers of the herbal plants, journey within the Sensory Peace Labyrinth, and engage the inner creative spirit within us and within all creation.

Bring a water bottle, sunscreen, long pants, comfortable clothes and shoes (weather appropriate), and a lawn chair (if uncomfortable standing or sitting on benches).



## Presbyterian Women

**PW Bible Study: What My Grandmothers Taught Me**

**Mon., Oct. 4 7–8:30 pm | Tues., Oct. 5 10 am–12 pm**

Tamar is the first woman identified in Matthew's genealogy. Her story is probably the least familiar. A foreigner, Tamar outwits her father-in-law Judah to continue the family line that ultimately leads to Jesus. She invites us to listen to the voices of marginal, powerless women who sacrificially do their best to keep their families alive and viable.

Both sessions will meet on Zoom. For more information, email [PW.ELPC@gmail.com](mailto:PW.ELPC@gmail.com).



## A Return to In-Person Taizé Prayer Services

On Wed., Sept. 8, for the first time in almost 19 months, more than a dozen people entered back into the ELPC Chapel for Taizé, to sing prayers, be quiet and still, light candles, and contemplate God's divine presence in their lives and the world. It was so exciting to feel the intimacy of sung prayer and God's presence and see the Chapel returned to its contemplative, welcoming, holy, and ambient space.



According to the BBC, “The Taizé community is an ecumenical monastic order with a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation.” No wonder Taizé has been a centerpiece and entry point for many at ELPC over the last few decades. In my 16 months of working at ELPC, I would say this captures a large portion of who we aspire to be. We welcome a wide variety of spiritual expressions and paths, we seek to pursue peace and justice, and desire to ground that in a life of prayer and meditation.

As we head into fall, we are excited to build upon the history and tradition of Taizé in France and at ELPC. Through fall and leading up to Advent, we will be focusing on the Beatitudes, meditating on the simple, yet life-altering teaching of Jesus, using our bodies to open us up to Jesus' ninefold path. We will be weaving in more embodied ways of praying, using palm crosses, mandalas, prayer stones and beads, art, and finger labyrinths.

So, if you find yourself weary and your devotion to justice and peace wavering in these hard times, join us on Wednesdays, 7 pm, to pray and meditate in song, silence, and body and find your spirits renewed. If you are unable to make it in person, keep your eyes out for a 15-minute snippet of each week's Taizé service that will include music, a meditation, and a prayer that you can sit and listen to at any point during your week.



## Taking a Visit to the Asian Lantern Festival

Would you like to reunite with some old friends? Our Connections Group will meet at the Pittsburgh Zoo on **Sun., Oct. 24**, 6:30 pm, to explore the Asian Lantern Festival. Tickets are \$20 (\$17 for Zoo members), and may be purchased online (specify Oct. 24, 6:30 pm) or at the gate. Be sure to bring your mask. RSVP to [connectelpc@gmail.com](mailto:connectelpc@gmail.com).



## Stewardship Sunday is November 7

How many of us have wished that God would work on our timeline and just do exactly what we ask? How many of us have been awakened by the brilliance of God's glory when it showed up in God's way, in God's time?



It takes faith to go where God leads. This year, we are summoning our faith as we walk with God in re-activating our church and manage the ongoing effects of the pandemic. In order to keep ELPC vital and be prepared to follow God, we are planning a pledge goal of \$760,000, which is a 4% increase over last year.

We also are planning a fall food drive to support our sisters and brothers who are experiencing food insecurity. Requested items include canned fruits, vegetables, and tuna; pastas; instant potatoes; etc.

During this season, **listen** for the sounds of God's presence in birds singing, belly laughter, and the choir's anthems. **Watch** for God's presence in spectacular murals, crunchy leaves, and

purple sunrises. **Experience** God's presence in the courage of civil servants, the tenderness of caregivers, and the deep commitment of our teachers.

As we attend to all that God has given us and to where God has led us, our hope is that we all can be prayerful and faithful in pledging, so that our church can follow where God is leading us in 2022. Join us for worship on **Stewardship Sunday, Nov. 7**, and come forward with your pledge and food donations.

## Intermediate SSL Class

Our intermediate Spanish as a Second Language class meets on Thursdays, 4 pm. You are welcome to join us as we learn about ourselves, our neighbors, and God through the Spanish language! Join us on Zoom at [tiny.cc/elpc-ssl-class](https://tiny.cc/elpc-ssl-class).

## 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 **Noor Feghali Najjar**, son of Yana Najjar and Maisa Feghali, who celebrated his baptism on Sept. 12.
- Congratulations to **Paul Miller** and **Brenden Taylor**, who were united in marriage on Sept. 4.
- Congratulations to **Lindsey Ericson** and **Elias Szabo-Wexler**, who were united in marriage on Sept. 18.
- Join us in welcoming our new members, **Philip Kaufholz** and **Margaret Peck**.
- YWCA Greater Pittsburgh will honor **Pastor Patrice** with the inaugural *Bridge Builder Equity Award* as part of their 2021 Equity Awards luncheon on Nov. 5. The award recognizes a woman whose work remains true to their ethnic heritage and roots as they champion strategic initiatives so that the Pittsburgh of our future centers and engages women of color.

### Prayers

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

- Daniel Kirk
- Deborah Marx' mother, Theresa Marx
- Cathleen Malmstrom's father, George Malmstrom



*“...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 Updates

- For the most up-to-date information about ministries, mask policies, and building hours, visit [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church).
- The ELPC building will be closed on **Mon., Oct. 11**, in observance of **Indigenous Peoples’ Day**.

## Need Help with Yard Work?

Need some help with yard work this fall? Know someone who could use some extra hands outside? ELPC youth would love to be of service on **Sat., Oct. 23**. Contact Sara Hackett at **412.673.2926**.

## Save the Dates for the Giving Tree

The Deacons are making plans for their Annual Giving Tree Ministry. ELPC members have always been extremely generous in supporting this important ministry, and we look forward to providing gifts to children in our community once more. This year, you will have three Sundays to take gift tags or participate online using SignUpGenius.



Tags will be distributed in person and online via SignUpGenius on **Sun., Nov. 14, 21, and 28**.

Gifts will be do at the church no later than **Sun., Dec. 5**.



## You’re Invited to the LGBTQ Ministry’s Spiritual Gathering

All LGBTQIA+ folks and allies are welcome to attend our LGBTQ Ministry’s next Spiritual Gathering on **Sat., Oct. 23, 9 am**.

For more details or to RSVP, please contact Wil Forrest at [Wil@coh.net](mailto:Wil@coh.net) or **412.441.3800 x118**.

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