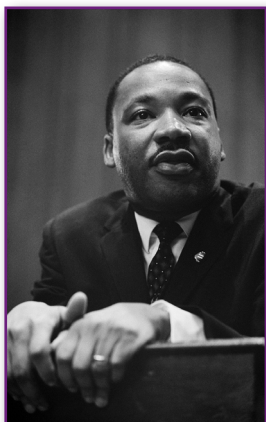


Continuing the Discussion on the Letter from Birmingham Jail

In January, the Facing Systemic Racism Committee and the Faith Formation Board collaborated to present Pastor Randy's introduction to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, written in 1963. In that authoritative presentation, Pastor Randy provided the historical and theological context for this important document. A recording of the session is available **online**.



Following Sanctuary worship on **Sun., March 13**, the Facing Systemic Racism Committee will present our second session on the letter. Led by Dr. Beverly Harris-Schenz, we will explore a summary of one of the seminal issues in Dr. King's letter: "just" vs "unjust" laws.

Dr. King explains the use of "legality" in authoritarian societies, as a means to control and discriminate against marginalized people. Such "laws" apply to those groups, but rarely to those in authority. As examples, Dr. King cites laws used by segregationists in Alabama to prevent Blacks from voting; the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, which led Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to follow a higher moral law; as well

as the laws employed by Hitler to discriminate and isolate Jews, and those in Hungary against their freedom fighters.

There is no dearth of other historical examples. However, our discussion will focus primarily on how "unjust" laws have been used in the past and are currently used in our country to discriminate against and marginalize people of color. This presentation will be followed by small group discussions, both in person and on Zoom.

Join us in person in the Social Hall or online at tiny.cc/mlk-letter-2. You also may call in by dialing **301.715.8592** and entering meeting ID **841 7387 8710** and passcode **442300** when prompted.

Save the Date for Our Final Session

Our third session will be held on **Sat., April 9**, 6 pm. Together, we will explore Dr. King's disappointment in the white church of his day, and how that relates to our current reality.

We hope you will join us for these timely and important conversations. Keep a look out for more information.

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Theme: Rest Stops

March 6* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
 March 13 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
 March 20 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
 March 27 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

March 6* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
 March 13 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
 March 20 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
 March 27 Rev. Dr. Randy Bush

Taizé Prayer Service

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. BJ Woodworth

Our Journey Through Lent Begins on Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, March 2**, and ELPC will offer two services, both of which will include the imposition of ashes. At noon, Kathryn Ophardt, our seminary intern, will lead a reflective time of word and prayer. Then at 7 pm, Pastor BJ will commemorate the start of Lent through the music and prayers of Taizé.

Please join us for this sacred time of ritual and reflection in the beautiful space of our ELPC sanctuary.



East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

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Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Bush, Pastor



I was thinking recently about the phrase, “accident of birth.” The moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum referred to it in the following paragraph:

“All human beings are worthy of equal respect and concern. The accident of where one is born is just that—an accident; any human being might have been born in any nation. Recognizing this, we should not allow differences of nationality or class or ethnic membership or even gender to erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings.”
(The Cosmopolitan Tradition)

Having traveled to many other nations and lived in a few for various periods of time, I have sometimes wondered what my life would have been like if I’d been born in Europe or Africa or New Zealand. I wouldn’t have been an American citizen. I possibly wouldn’t have spoken English as my first language. I may have had a totally different career and family life. I might not have been raised as a Christian or as part of a church. It is unsettling to imagine a world in which so many of the things I take for granted might not have existed at all for me.

This type of “thought experiment” is initially worrying because I find so much joy and comfort in my life as it is—my vocation, my family, my citizenship here. Yet all these things that give me joy, also are accidents of birth and location. Some of them have come to me as a result of white privilege or by living in a First World nation. Some of them have come by chance or luck or old-fashioned hard work. They are how I’ve learned to define my life from my own perspective, but thankfully God’s perspective is wider and deeper and richer than my own.

If I’d been born in another nation, I would still have been just as much a recipient of God’s love and mercy as I am now. If my first language wasn’t English, I would still have the ability to learn of God, pray to God, and discover in Christ the “logos”/Word made flesh. If I had a different career, I would still be a child of God. And I’d wager to say that even if my faith upbringing had not been Christian, I would have hopefully learned about “loving one’s neighbors as I wish to be loved” in a way that included me in God’s welcoming covenant grace for all creation.

I guess all this is to say that I don’t believe there are “accidents of birth” from God’s perspective. Whoever and wherever we are, we are born into God’s world and thus benefit from God’s eternal love. This Lenten season, listen to the world news and consider your own life trajectory as you ponder the wonder of your own “non-accidental” birth.

Randy Bush

Mission Matters

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

Immigration and Integration Ministry Team Helps Refugees Settle in Pittsburgh

The ELPC Immigration and Integration Ministry Team, under leadership of Eric Jester, has helped to resettle: a mom and son from Sudan; a grandma, daughter, and granddaughter from Iraq; and two families of six—both from Syria. Kids range in age from 6–17, and most of the parents are in their 40s. The families moved into apartments in Brentwood, Carnegie, and Crafton Heights.



ELPC showed up with a half-dozen volunteers each time we were called to serve—some directly to the site, others behind the scenes. We built and moved furniture, made beds, cleaned and stocked kitchens, loaded and unloaded boxes, and much more. Our volunteers traded smiles, muddled through translations, and made everyone feel welcome on their first day in their own home.

The younger kids followed all of us with that bemused fascination kids get when something new or exciting is happening. Their parents...God bless their parents. They looked bewildered and overwhelmed. On our way out the door, without fail, a parent would grab Eric's hand and almost wouldn't let go. The families offered a glass of juice, a can of pop, or anything else they could rummage out of their unpacked boxes. A forced, frightened journey—thousands of miles and years in the making—finally ended with a warm welcome and lots of love.

For more information on how to donate or volunteer, contact Eric Jester at Eric@new-burgh.com.

OHM and the Pittsburgh Marathon are Back



The Neighbors Committee invites runners—and fast walkers—to support Open Hand Ministries' 2022 Pittsburgh Marathon fundraiser on **Sun., May 1**. This year, OHM is part of the Run For A Reason Charity Program.

ELPC hopes to have two relay teams, so we need you! Individual runners for all races also are encouraged—and registration is free! This is an opportunity for fun, fitness, and fellowship, as we support our mission partner. We will encourage and inspire each other!

Registration closes on **Mon., March 31**. For more information on joining an ELPC relay team, contact Bob Forloines (team captain) at rforloines@gmail.com or **610.331.1134**, or Emily Rosenthal at EJR116@gmail.com or **412.963.0139**.

Session News

At its recent meeting, the Session:

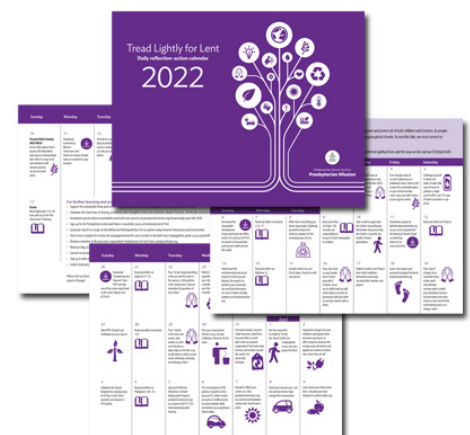
- Reviewed preparations for the Congregational Meeting;
- Nominated Mark DeWitt to the Centennial Fund and Chris Martin as ELPC treasurer;
- Heard an update confirming plans to remove Stonewall Jackson from the Sanctuary window (likely this summer); and
- Received new members from the recent Inquirers' Class.

Tread Lightly for Lent

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee is offering a daily reflection-action calendar from PC(USA).

During Lent, we slow down, take time, and examine our spiritual lives and how we live out our faith. We strive to move toward more sustainable choices, and to tread lightly on God's Earth.

The calendar has actions, challenges, readings, reflections and prayers. Our hope is that this Lenten calendar will be the beginning of actions intended to create more mindful behaviors throughout the year. Download a copy at tiny.cc/lent-calendar.



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

"It [the reign of God] is like yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."
—Luke 13:21

This month in our selections called *P's and Q's of Scripture* we continue reading the 8th century prophets Hosea and Micah who proclaimed their message as the nation of Israel collapsed. We taste the diversity of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the ancient Qumran community by reading texts found in Cave 4. Our New Testament readings include short sayings of Jesus written only in the gospels of Luke and Matthew (called Q). Finally, in Paul's letter to the Romans, we reflect upon both the cosmic and intimate proportions of salvation offered in Jesus Christ. Join our journey!

March 6: Hosea 13:1–14;1,4; Qumran (Cave 4) *The Secret of the Way Things Are*; Romans 4:13–5:11; Luke (Q) 12:8–14

March 13: Micah 1:1–16; Qumran (Cave 4) *Proverbs*; Romans 5:12–6:14; Luke (Q) 12:16–34

March 20: Micah 2:1–14; Qumran (Cave 4) *Redemption and Resurrection*; Romans 6:15–7:6; Luke (Q) 12:39–59

March 27: Micah 3:1–4:5; Qumran (Cave 4) *Full Disclosure from the Damascus Document*; Romans 7:7–25; Luke (Q) 13:18–27

Parenting Circle

Facilitator: Trish Buben

March: *The Sandbox Revolution*

We will continue discussing *The Sandbox Revolution: Raising Kids for a Just World*. 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

March: *Wholehearted Faith*

New participants are always welcome! For details, contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu at hajdu625@comcast.net.

March 6, 13, and 20: We will be discussing chapters 7–12 of *Wholehearted Faith*, by the late Rachel Held Evans and her friend Jeff Chu.

March 27: Jeff Chu will be joining us on Zoom to discuss this book and his involvement with it.

Seekers

Facilitator: Gwen Puza | gpuza9@gmail.com

March 6: *The Ten Commandments, a Radical Manifesto for the 21st Century*

This video by the Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, discussing her book *No Other Gods*, reintroduces the Ten Commandments text as a political and spiritual prescription for our time. When lived, the Commandments liberate us from immoral systems, guide us to live lightly on the Earth, and create a foundation on which to build real community.

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons is senior minister of First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, New York. She serves a congregation comprised mostly of people who have left their family's faith or who were raised without religion.

March 13: *What I Learned About Life in Today's Saudi Arabia, During My Recent Trip There*

Gwen Puza will share her experiences from her recent trip to Dubai, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain with the World Affairs Council of Houston. Gwen will share what she learned about today's openness of those societies, the national program of empowerment of women, and how women are enjoying their new opportunities.

March 20 and 27: *Ask, Seek, and Knock*

We know that God calls us to seek God in prayer and to listen for God's voice, but how do we actually do that? This two-week class will help us understand how prayer and discernment intersect, and how we can be prayerful people who live lives guided by God.

This will be presented in person by the Rev. Dr. Graham Standish, executive director of Samaritan Counseling, Guidance, and Consulting in Sewickley. He is the author of numerous books on Christian Mysticism, as well as an adjunct professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, a spiritual director and clergy coach, and a former pastor.

Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Coordinator of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Sat., March 5: Volunteering at Global Links 12–3:45 pm

Youth in grades 6–12 are volunteering at Global Links, a non-profit that shares surplus medical supplies rescued from the U.S. healthcare system to support health programs locally and globally. We will meet at ELPC and return at 3:45 pm. Global Links requires all volunteers to be vaccinated and to wear masks. Register online at ELPC.church.



Sun., March 13: Roller Skating 1–3:15 pm

Youth in grades 6–12 are invited to go roller skating at Beulah Presbyterian Church with Beulah's youth group. We will be eating lunch in the McKelvy Room before we leave, or you may meet us at Beulah at 1 pm. Register online at ELPC.church.

Children's Ministry Updates

Beginning **Sun., March 6**, ELPC looks forward to nurturing the faith of our youngest worshippers in the following ways:

- **Church School** | In-person classes will resume for all children.
- **Children's Time** | During our Sanctuary service, children are invited to join Pastor Heather and other leaders on the Chancel Steps for an interactive Children's Time. Of course, kids also are welcome to stay in the pews with their families if they are more comfortable!
- **Children's Church** | Following Children's Time, children in pre-school–grade 3 are invited to join Ms. Sara and other leaders in the Chapel for a time of learning together. Children younger than age 3 also are welcome to attend, if accompanied by their parents. Parents and caregivers are invited to gather in the back of the Sanctuary during the Offertory Anthem. Children will return to the Sanctuary during the Doxology, and meet their parents in the Sanctuary at that time.
- **The Kid's Corner** | ELPC is offering resources for those who wish to keep their hands busy during worship together. The Nursery also remains open to young children who are accompanied by their parents/caregivers during worship (there will be no staff or volunteers present), and the Sanctuary service will be livestreamed in the space.

For more detailed and up-to-date information about our ministries to children and youth, please visit ELPC.church or sign up for our weekly newsflash.

Reminder: If your youth's vaccination status has changed, please update their information using our **online form**. If you have yet to register youth for programming this school year, you can do so at ELPC.church.

club one sixteen

We are excited to resume our regular schedule on **Wed., March 2**. All children in grade 1 and up are invited to participate.

Going forward, we will gather on Wednesdays, 4:30–6:30 pm. Registration required.

Mission Overnight

Youth in grades 8–12 are invited to a Mission Overnight, **Sat.–Sun., May 14–15**. We will be serving in our community and spending the night camping at the church (in the Courtyard if the weather permits).

More details will be available in April. Participation in the Mission Overnight is a requirement for attending the Summer Mission Trip.



High School Mission Trip to Memphis

Youth who are currently in grades 8–12 are welcome to join us on our summer Mission Trip to Memphis, Tennessee, **August 7–13!** We'll serve with Memphis Youth Mission.

Learn more at YouthMissionCo.org and keep a look out for more details.

Join Our Enneagram Study Group

The Enneagram is an ancient tool with modern appeal. Its accuracy can be disarming and its applied wisdom can be transformative. It doesn't put you in a box; it reveals the box that you are already in and offers a path out!

Whether you are new to the Enneagram or have been dabbling in it for years, you are invited to participate in our Enneagram Study Group, led by Lynn Holden. Join us to glean a deeper appreciation of how we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," and how that plays out in loving our neighbors.

When | We'll meet on the third Monday of each month (March–June and September–December), 12:30–1:30 pm

Where | Sessions will be held on Zoom at tiny.cc/enneagram. Enter meeting ID **966 6904 5127** and passcode **9types** if prompted.

Required Book | You'll need a copy of *The Sacred Enneagram: Finding Your Path to Spiritual Growth* by Christopher L. Heuertz.

About Our Facilitator

Licensed as a professional counselor, trained as a spiritual director and certified as an Enneagram



practitioner, Lynn Holden is a lifelong learner who is committed to personal and spiritual growth. She creates a safe space for

others to slow down and get curious about the life they are living. You can learn more about her from her website LynnHolden.com.

Presbyterian Women

PW Bible Study: What My Grandmothers Taught Me

Tues., March 1 10 am–12 pm | Mon., March 7 7–8:30 pm

Matthew's "history" of salvation culminates with Mary, a young girl, in danger of complete disgrace, who has the courage to say "Yes!" to God.

Mary's story is not sweet or romantic. Her experience of motherhood includes a bewildering birth and a risky escape as a refugee to evade the assassination of her son. Emmanuel ("God with us") is born into dangerous political turmoil, among the powerless. The birth is recognized and celebrated by strangers from a faraway land, who follow a different religion. It takes courage to walk alongside Mary and other unmarried mothers, immigrants, refugees, and people of other faith traditions.

Join us for our lesson, *Mary* (Matthew 1:18–2:23). Both sessions will meet on Zoom. This is the first of two lessons about Mary. In April, we will consider "Mary in the Faith and Tradition of the Church." For more information, please email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.



Register for Our 2022 Lenten Silent Retreat

In returning and rest you shall be saved.

In quietness and in trust shall be your strength.

We invite you to come away with God, in the middle of the Lenten season, for a quiet weekend retreat at St. Emma's Retreat House in Greensburg, from 5 pm, on **Fri., March 18**, until 12 pm, on **Sun., March 20**.

The retreat will be a time to rest your body, mind, and spirit; to play and pray; to eat and be still; to walk and sit; to talk and be silent; and to simply follow "the unforced rhythms of grace."



"Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace... Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."—Matthew 11:28–30 (The Message)

If these words from Jesus ring true in your spirit, join us. The cost is \$150. (Scholarships are available. Contact Pastor BJ at BJW@coh.net for details.) Spots are limited, so RSVP by to Norma Meyer at Norma@coh.net by **Sun., March 13**.

LGBTQ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry

Sun., March 27: Spiritual Gathering 12:30 pm

Join us at our LGBTQ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering—either in person at the church or online via Zoom. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike welcome—in fact we will be focusing on our wonderful allies during this time together!

For more details, contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x118.

God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.



Congratulations to Our New Church Officers

At our annual Congregational Meeting in late February, attendees were presented with and elected our new slate of church officers. Join us in congratulating:

Deacons | JoEllen Aleshire, Karen Beasley, Yodit Betru, Dana Carl, Annabel Degenholtz (Youth Deacon), Jeff Fritz, and Jason Lucarelli

Elders | Ray Anthony, Hollen Barmer, Sandra Brake, Carol Chonoska, Carla Depperman, Becky Gloninger, Stephen Simpson-Hunt, and Matt Stuft

Congregational Trustee of Centennial Fund | Kathy Callahan

Nominating Committee | Damon Bethea, Michele Bossers, Andrea DeVries, Josh Mattila, Jill Millard (Session Representative), and Elaine Phillips (Deacon Representative)

We also give thanks for those who served on the Nominating Committee for the class of 2022: Karen Beasley, Andrea DeVries, Tim Engelhardt (chair), Jill Millard (Session Representative), Elaine Phillips (Deacon Representative), Jan Pressman.

And lastly, thank you to our officers who have completed their terms:

Retiring Elders | Ray Anthony, Michelle Bard, Damon Bethea, Mark DeWitt, Ike Ezekoye, Katie Haas-Conrad, Corinne Krimmel, Pam Walaski, and Russ Walker

Retiring Deacons | Dana Carl, Doug Cooper, Dylan Geibel, Liz Gonda, Linda Harrington, and Henry Petrilli

ELPC People

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

Good News

Mike Hellman recently celebrated the birth of his great-niece, Amelia Rambin. Congratulations to her parents, Andrea and Aaron Rambin.

Prayers

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

- Peta Harrigan Cole's cousin, Juan Harriga

Opportunities to Explore ELPC

This month, ELPC tour guides will be leading us as we explore our Sanctuary and Chapel on **Sun., March 6**, and climb our church tower on **Sun., March 20**.

If you're interested in participating in a tour, please gather in the Highland Lobby immediately following our Sanctuary worship service.

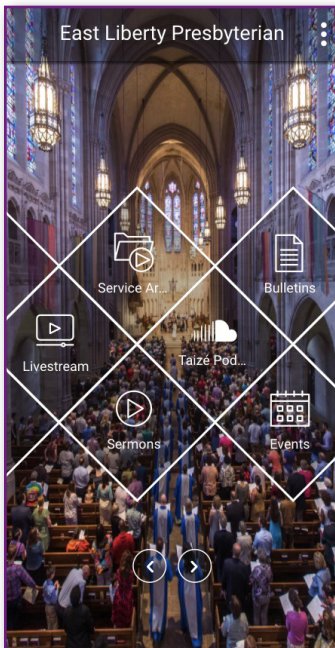


“...inviting all to join our diverse, inclusive family of faith, transcending boundaries of race, class, ability, culture, age, gender and sexual identity to become one in Christ.”

Spring Forward

Daylight Savings Time will begin on **Sun., March 13**. Remember to set your clocks forward by one hour.

Download Our New App



ELPC recently published a mobile app to serve as a hub for all ELPC-related news, events, and digital offerings. On the app, you can stream live and archived worship services and concerts, watch sermons, listen to our Taizé podcast, download bulletins, browse events, connect with our social media pages, read up-to-date news, and more.

The app is available for free on Google Play™ and on the App Store®. Search for “East Liberty Presbyterian.”



Support Our Winter Food Drive

As a Matthew 25 Congregation, ELPC actively seeks to engage in the world and make a difference in the lives of our neighbors. And one of the Matthew 25 principles that we strive to live into is to eradicate systemic poverty. One of the ways we do so is by feeding our neighbors who are living with food insecurity.

Following Sanctuary worship on **Sun., March 20**, the Neighbors Committee will host a Winter Food Drive in the Staff Parking Lot on Baum Blvd. Requested donations include: canned or dried fruit, canned vegetables, cereal, crackers, individual fruit cups, jelly, peanut butter, pasta and sauces, rice, soups and broth, salt, seasonings, and spices.

Questions? Contact Tim VanFleet at tavanfleet@gmail.com or Pastor Patrice at patricefs@coh.net.

