

Reaching Out

newsletter of east liberty presbyterian church

July 2022



Worshiping Outdoors

Beginning on **Sun., July 3**, our 10 am, Summer worship service will move outdoors to the ELPC Courtyard (weather permitting). There will be additional seating in the Garth Overlook Room for those who prefer to stay indoors, and the service will be livestreamed to a screen inside.

Pastors Patrice and Heather will lead us in worship, joined by Dr. Ed and our Summer Choir. Dr. Michael Warren and the Journey Praise Team will lead music on **Sun., July 17**. And on **Sun., July 31**, we'll welcome the Rev. Sheldon Sorge, executive minister of Pittsburgh Presbytery as our guest preacher.

Watch Torture in Our Name

The Justice Committee invites you to a screening of *Torture in Our Name* following worship on **Sun., July 17**, in the Garth Overlook Room. Snacks will be provided.



In this compelling 35-minute documentary for faith audiences, filmmaker Matthew Gossage showcases the tenacity and resilience of people who have faced the torture of solitary confinement first-hand and are working to end it once and for all.

The film traces the stories of state organizers in Louisiana, New Jersey, and New York, where survivors of solitary and their allies have mounted successful legislative campaigns in their respective states. New Jersey (2019) and New York (2021) were the first two states in the nation to legislate bans on long-term isolated confinement.

Learn more about the film at nrcat.org.

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Summer Worship | 10 am

July 3* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
July 10 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
July 17 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
July 24 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
July 31 Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm
Rev. BJ Woodworth

Prayers for Our Mission Trip Teams

Join us in praying for our youth and adults as they head out on their summer mission trips.

Middle schoolers will be serving at Crestfield Camp in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, and high schoolers will be serving with Memphis Youth Mission in Memphis, Tennessee.



Session News

In June, the ELPC Session:

- Heard updates from the Interim Pastor Nominating Committee;
- Received reports from the Human Resources, Property, and Finance Committees; and
- Deliberated modified building hours for the summer months.

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

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Pastoral Message

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf, Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries



Seasons of transition stir up a lot of feelings: sentiments of the past; thoughts about “the way things have always been;” concerns and hopes for a future that seems so unknown; feelings of worry, excitement, grief and uncertainty...often ALL of these things at the same time!

As I write this letter, I am aware of many waves of transition washing over us as individuals and as a community: Pastor Randy's new call in Maryland, the work of an Interim

Pastor Nomination Committee, the present moment dubbed: “the interim before the interim.” Around us there are graduations, summer camps, births and deaths, weddings, separations, retirements and new jobs...the list goes on.

Our faith assures us that these experiences and these reactions are a natural part of life. Throughout scripture we hear story after story of God's people trying to navigate life's twists and turns from unexpected hardship to hoped-for new life. And our Gospels all show us that even Jesus' disciples felt this flurry of mixed emotion after his death and his resurrection.

One of my favorite Easter stories is found in the Gospel of John. John tells the story of how, after seeing the risen Christ in the Upper Room at least two times, Peter goes fishing. Several disciples join him on that boat, as they head for open waters and the familiar territory of the past.

Without the ability to literally follow in Jesus' footsteps, they were unsure of who they were. Without their Teacher by their side, quieting storms, admonishing Pharisees or feeding multitudes, they weren't quite sure how to move ahead as his disciples. And even though they had *multiple* assurances that Jesus was alive, they weren't quite sure what it meant for them—for their present moment or future.

So Jesus shows up and makes them breakfast on the beach. He doesn't call them out for their back, or even walk out to them on the water as he had done in the past. He let's them have their moment...and when they are done, Jesus is waiting for them on dry land with a meal prepared to feed their souls.

In this congregational season of transition, many of us might not know what we are to do next. Like the disciples we know that the God we follow and serve is alive and well, but things are *different*. And different is disorienting even in the best of times. We may find ourselves—like the disciples—trying to go backwards to familiar moments in our life (individual and congregational) in which we had more certainty and felt like we had more control.

Regardless of how we strive to process the fluidity of this present moment, the truth in this Scripture passage gives me hope. The same God who in Christ was frying up some fish on the seashore is the same Christ who draws near to us, wherever God finds us in our faith or in our doubt. This God is the same Christ who tries to nourish us for the ministry that lies ahead, who gently reminds us to “feed his sheep,” and who sends us out in the power of the Spirit to BE the Body of Christ in new seasons and new ways.

My prayer is that we will find rest, recalibration, and refreshment for our shared journey together, and find comfort in the Good News that God is with US still.

Pastor Heather

Our Young Adult Ministry is Back in Action

In the season we are in, we are endeavoring to change our language and the words we use. Specifically, the term “ointment” is weird for me! I am not sure why it’s different, but it’s even harder to say. Often we see words in our biblical texts like “praise” (which means to offer high honors), but we don’t always know the definition. Or it could mean that this word choice doesn’t captivate us as some other words do.

This makes me think of the word “extol.” As the psalmist was crafting the words of Psalm 30:1, I imagine the writer reflecting on the times they felt afflicted and afraid. Reflecting on past failures is necessary to push us forward. Friends, let’s not forget to take a moment to **Thank God** and offer praise, not just for what is ahead but also for what—and who—we have encountered in our past.

Included in our quest to change our language, the Young Adult Ministry (YAM) will join the Spiritual Life Committee for the viewing of *The Day of a Stranger* following worship on **Sun., July 24**. YAMs will have a special section in the Garth Overlook Room, where we can discuss and reflect on the topics from the film. Please see **page 4** for more information.

Derail Holcomb

Coordinator of Young Adult Ministry

Interim Pastor Nominating Committee Update

As our church entered a period of pastoral transition after Pastor Randy’s departure, the ELPC Session directed the Nominating Committee to assist in the formation of an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee (IPNC). The IPNC will work to bring an interim pastor to ELPC to serve ahead of the installation of a new senior pastor. We are blessed to have Pastors Heather and Patrice serving as co-pastors until an interim pastor is called to ELPC.



The IPNC members are:

- Hollen Barmer
- Damon Bethea
- Doug Cooper
- Becky Gloninger
- Polly Mattila
- Drew Simpson
- Cami Teacoach

Over the coming months, the IPNC will work with the Pittsburgh Presbytery as we nominate an interim pastor to lead our church. The IPNC will keep the congregation abreast of our progress.

We ask the congregation for prayers of discernment and words of encouragement as we take on this task.

Thank you and blessings,

Interim Pastor Nominating Committee

YAMs to Host a Game Day for All

Rest is essential, relaxation is great, but play is even better! Our Young Adult Ministry will be hosting a Game Day on **Sat., July 30**, 9 am–3 pm, for all people with various abilities.

There is no cost to attend. Food and entertainment will be provided, but we could use some volunteers!

To RSVP or volunteer, contact Derail Holcomb at DerailH@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x133**.

ELPC People

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

Good News

- Congratulations to **Travis Castle**, who recently celebrated his baptism.
- Best wishes to the newlyweds in our faith family:
 - **Jason Lucarelli & Ronald VanNess**
 - **Melia Chandler & Paige McKenzie**
- Congratulations to the four youth who celebrated their confirmation on Pentecost:
 - Sam Bard
 - Travis Castle
 - Cody Conley
 - Annie Cowan

Prayers

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

- Carla Coles
- Conrad Seamen
- Herma Stewart’s nephew

“...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.”

Building Closure

- The church building will be closed on Independence Day, **Mon., July 4.**
- To offer a sabbath to the church building and staff, ELPC will be closed on Mondays (starting July 11), for the remainder of summer.



Attend Our LGBTQ Ministry's Next Spiritual Gathering

All allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are invited to our LGBTQ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering following worship on **Sun., July 10.**

To ask questions or RSVP, contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x118.**

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

Contemplative Film Screening & Discussion: Day of a Stranger

Join the Spiritual Life Committee in the Garth Overlook Room following worship on **Sun., July 24**, to view and discuss *Day of a Stranger* (2021), a short film about Trappist monk Thomas Merton, one of the most influential spiritual writers of the 20th century.

Through rare audio recordings, the film explores the final years of Merton's life, from 1965–1968, when he lived as a hermit in the Kentucky woods.



Interweaving meditative images of his hermitage nestled deep in the woods of Kentucky and rare audio recordings he made as a hermit; the film pieces together a first-person narrative of one of the 20th century's most brilliant minds. Learn more at DayOfaStranger.com.

RSVP to Pastor BJ at BJW@coh.net by **Sat., July 23.**