

Reaching Out

newsletter of east liberty presbyterian church

August 2022



Photo by Hunter Hodak

Rally Day Preview

On **Sun., Sept. 11**, we will begin our 2022–2023 Church School year with classes for people of all ages, and resume our two Sunday services with Journey worship at 8:45 am, and Sanctuary worship at 11 am.

Worship and adult Church School classes will continue in a hybrid format, while classes for children will be held in person only.

We are excited to kickoff a new program year of life and ministry together!

Thanks for Making VCS a Success



We rejoice that we were able to gather in person for our annual Vacation Church School program in June. Children, youth, and adults explored our call to live as Peacemakers through worship, games, service, art, stories, and being a community together. See photos from our week together throughout this issue of *Reaching Out*.

We also give thanks for each of the volunteers who helped ensure that VCS 2022 was a success!

Pre-K & K | Elizabeth Albright, Jen Castle, Marilyn Castle, Carol Chonosko, Lydia Delp, Doris Dick, Heather Lawrence, Luca Leisher, Christian Lewand, Mariessa Mizzel, Jan Pressman

Grades 1–2 | Frank Bauerle, Andrea DeVries, Peta Harrigan-Cole, Carol Hoehn, Anastasia Morin-Hutten, Emmy Thompson, Sonora Valencheck

Grades 3–5 | Chrissy Braho, Sara Hackett, Sonya-Marie Morely, Kay Shissler

Art & Afternoon Activities | Sherry Anderson, Mabel Buben, Trish Buben, Sandy Edgecombe, Jonah Koetke, Ellie Willson

Food Ministry | DeeDee Frye, Mary Alice Lightle, Elaine Phillips

Recreation | Annabel Degenholtz, Dylan Geibel, Owen George

Registration | Megan Leisher and Kay Shissler

Worship | Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy, Michael Warren, Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Summer Worship | 10 am

August 7* Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
August 14 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
August 21 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
August 28 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm
Rev. BJ Woodworth

We're Closed on Mondays This Summer

ELPC will be closed on Mondays for the remainder of the summer. During this time, we hope to provide rest for the building while conserving energy, water, and other resources, and to effectively and equitably navigate staffing shortages.

Even with the building closed, the ministry of the church continues: administrative, program, and pastoral staff who are currently scheduled to work on Mondays will continue to do so remotely, and, as always, calls will be directed to a pastor on call in the event of an emergency.

Know that the church building will remain open the other six days of the week, fully staffed, and ready to welcome you and our community.

The church building is open on the following days and times. These hours are subject to change.

Sundays | 8 am–4 pm
Mondays | Closed
Tuesdays | 9 am–8 pm
Wednesdays | 9 am–8 pm
Thursdays | 9 am–8 pm
Fridays | 9 am–5 pm
Saturdays | 8 am–4 pm

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

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Staff Leadership

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

Associate Pastor for Mission Ministries

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The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries

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The Rev. BJ Woodworth

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and Minister of Taizé Prayer*

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*Coordinator of Christian Education
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Dr. Edward Alan Moore

Music Director and Organist

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Pastoral Message

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



I was recently asked to reflect and write a short piece for another newsletter reflecting on two questions:

- What disruption did your church experience during the last two years?
- How did your church respond to this disruption?

The obvious disruption experienced by ELPC and everyone in the world was the need to respond to COVID-19. Our most difficult decisions were to close the church building and suspend all in-person events, including worship; practice social distancing; and wear masks. We questioned whether we could still be the church at a distance and effectively worship, encourage, and support our members. And there were other disruptions, such as the inability to volunteer and serve our community, and the cancelation of youth and adult mission trips, just to name a few.

Even though the connotation of a disruption is typically perceived as negative, I have recently begun to realize that disruptions can be transformative. As we often do these days, I Googled the term “transformative disruptions,” just to see what Google had to say. I found that in 1995, the business theory of “disruptive innovation” was introduced by Clayton M. Christensen. Simplistically speaking, disruptive innovation occurs in business when “a small enterprise targets overlooked customers with a novel but modest offering and gradually moves upmarket to challenge the industry leaders.” (hbr.org)

Since the beginning stages of Covid, we have been trying to discern how God is moving us in new and innovative ways to be the church, and the Spirit of God has continually raised up this scripture passage in my spirit, “Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:18,19)

I continually ponder: are we positioning ourselves to perceive the new things God is doing in our midst...or are we so focused on what was, that we are not allowing space for transformative disruptions?

The transformative disruptions we experienced have proven to be fruitful:

- Gathering virtually for worship and other ministry/programmatic events opened the door for people near and far to be in relationship with us and with God
- Supporting mission with “drive-by” food, clothing, and toiletry donations ensured our neighbors needs were met
- Being faithful stewards of the treasures God has entrusted to us, enabled us to look at God’s gifts through a lens of God’s faithful provision, rather than scarcity
- By standing demonstratively and speaking boldly for what is righteous, just, and equitable in the sight of God, we have been and continue to be the faithful people of God

There are so many more things that God will do with and through us. So, as God continues to lead us through this time of discerning what is next for us as a community of faith, may we pray that this disruption will be transformative—shake up the norm—and provide the space and opportunity for prayerful discernment, acceptance, and realization of who God is calling ELPC to be in this interim time and beyond. None of us knows now, how God will orient or reorient our ministry to serve in new, innovative, faithful, and transformative ways in the years to come. Only God knows, and it is up to us to perceive it. May it be so.

Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

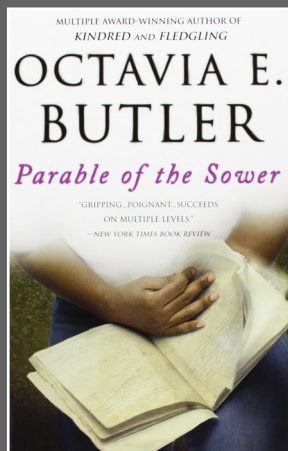
Active Living with Chronic Conditions

Do you have an ongoing health condition, such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, asthma, heart disease, chronic pain, cancer, depression, or another condition that affects your daily life?



The ELPC Health Ministry, in collaboration with Vintage Senior Center, is offering a “Self-Study” program to help you solve problems, manage your symptoms, and set and achieve goals. The program is *free*, but limited to people age 60 and older.

The program—presented in the memory of Carla Coles, who first launched this program at ELPC—begins the week of September 26. For more information and to register, contact Tom Sturgill at tsturgill@familylinks.org or **412.361.5003 x104**.



Environmental Book Club to Read *Parable of the Sower*

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee has selected *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler as its next book. You're invited to read it and join us for a discussion on **Thurs., Aug. 25, 7 pm**, led Nancy Heastings and Penn Hackney in the Highland Room or online via Zoom. For more details, please contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net.

Published in 1993, this climate sci-fi is set in 2024 California. The story's lead character is a 15-year-old Black girl whose father is a preacher. Global

climate change and economic crises have led to social chaos. Global warming has brought drought and rising seawater. The middle class and working poor live in gated neighborhoods, where they fend off the homeless with guns and walls. Fresh water is scarce and is as valuable as money. Fires are common. Public schools are being privatized, as are whole towns. In this atmosphere, a Presidential candidate named Christopher Donner is elected based on his promises to dismantle government programs and bring back jobs.

The book has had a resurgence and second-read reviewers comment, “But for sheer peculiar prescience, Butler’s novel and its sequel (*Parable of the Talents*) may be unmatched.”

For some writers, science fiction serves as means to delve into fantasy. But for Butler, it largely served as a vehicle to address issues facing humanity. It was this passionate interest in the human experience that imbued her work with a certain depth and complexity. Her books blended elements of science fiction and African American spiritualism.

Make New Connections

Connections Groups build small communities within the large ELPC congregation. We invite everyone who has participated in Connections in the past, as well as everyone else to these community-building events:

- **Sun., August 7, 5–7 pm**, we'll attend the **Reservoir of Jazz** live outdoor performance in Highland Park next to the reservoir. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and some picnic food to eat while we talk and listen to the performance.
- **Fri., Sept., 2, 6–8 pm**, we'll attend **Fridays at Frick** for some live music and food. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. You can bring picnic food or buy from the food trucks on site. We'll sit together and talk and listen to the music.

RSVP to Elaine Phillips at connectelpc@gmail.com.



LGBTQ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry

Sun., Aug. 14: Spiritual Gathering 11:30 am
All allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are invited to our LGBTQ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering following worship

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.**



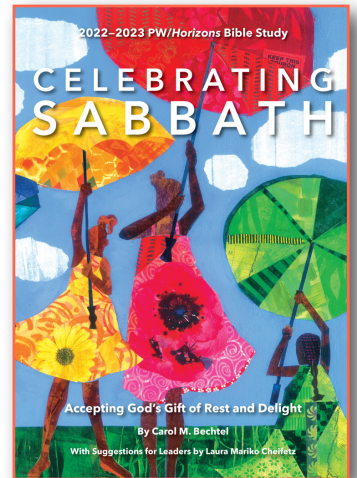
Presbyterian Women

Get Ready for PW Bible Study: Celebrating Sabbath
All women are invited to participate in our 2022–2023 PW Bible Study. This year, "Celebrating Sabbath" invites us to study Sabbath and to embrace Sabbath's life changing ways.

Pick up a Bible Study book after worship on **Sun., Aug. 21 or 28.**

Bible Study begins on **Tues., Sept. 6, 10 am,** and **Mon., Sept. 12, 7 pm.** We will meet monthly through May 2023.

Shabbat Shalom! May you have a peaceful Sabbath. For more information, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.



Young Adult Ministry

Derail Holcomb, Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries

Hey, y'all! I am excited for what is happening in our world and church. In this season, I believe God is showing all beings the importance of celebrating each others' similarities and differences. Therefore, we are sending out a survey to evaluate some of the differences we share as unique individuals; and our similarities that makes us all young adults. The survey will ask questions regarding likes, dislikes, and opportunities for future outreach. Keep a look out!

Virtual Happy Hour

Let's get together for a Virtual Happy Hour on **Fri., Aug. 26, 6–9 pm!** So many of us have lots of responsibilities and we need a moment to exhale and relax. Why not at our Virtual Happy Hour? Plan on joining us with your favorite beverage, and we'll get to know one another in anticipation of the start of the Church School year.

Congratulations, Grads!

Join us in congratulations those in our faith family who recently graduated:

- Katherine Virginia Berardi
- Antonio Luigi Giovanni
- Chey Harlan
- Ian Mackey-Piccolo
- Kira Mukogosi
- Antoinette Robinson
- Ethan Spangenberg
- Dove Valencheck
- Retina Williams



Session News

At its recent called meeting, the ELPC Session:

- Considered a cost-of-living adjustment for staff in light of current rates of inflation;
- Reviewed a Ministry Information Form (MIF) about ELPC, completed by the IPNC, as the next step in the search for an interim pastor; and
- Received three new members and approved the baptisms of two children.



ELPC People

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

Good News

- Congratulations to Katie Haas-Conrad and Alex Conrad on the birth of their daughter, **Eleanora Katelyn**.
- Congratulations to **Jason Dauer & David Falk** who renewed their wedding vows on July 9.
- Please welcome our new members and friends: **George & Cat Toro**, and **Judy Morrow**.

Prayers

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

- Sam Ditka's father, Ken MacArtney
- Eric Jester's grandfather
- Jay Poliziani
- Travis Simpson-Hunt's grandfathers
- Tony White, ELPC member and Deacon
- Eric Young, ELPC member and Deacon

Face Mask Policy Updates

Face masks are only required at indoor events, such as worship in the Sanctuary or Taizé in the Chapel, when families with small children are present. Individuals are always welcome to wear masks when at ELPC and masks will continue to be made available to all who enter the building. ELPC will continue to adhere to the guidelines of the CDC and Allegheny County Health Department, and may shift guidelines as community conditions change.

For the most up-to-date information about ministries, pandemic protocols, and building hours, please visit 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.”

Serving at Crestfield

In July, our Middle School Mission Trip team of six had a beautiful week serving at Crestfield Camp and around the Slippery Rock area.

