



# Reaching Out

newsletter of east liberty presbyterian church

June 2023



## Summer Worship

On **Sun., June 4**, we will shift to our summer worship schedule, holding one combined worship service at 10 am. We will worship in the Courtyard, weather permitting, with seating available in the Garth Overlook Room for those who prefer to worship indoors.

This early service will continue through Labor Day weekend, and will feature monthly communion and lively music.

We hope that you will make worshipping with our faith family a consistent part of your summer!

## Sunday Services

*\*Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

### Summer Worship | 10 am

June 4\* Rev. BJ Woodworth  
June 11 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
June 18 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf  
June 25 Rev. Dr. Darrell Knopp

## Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm  
Rev. BJ Woodworth

## Session News

In early May, Session:

- Voted to call a Congregational Meeting inviting ELPC members to vote on the sale of the Manse.
- Approved the formation of a task force to explore how we might provide educational materials on ELPC's stained glass windows on our website.
- Approved a motion from the Facing Systemic Racism Committee designating the Neighborhood Academy and the Pittsburgh Promise's Advancing Educators of Color program as the recipients of endowed scholarship funds from the already-established Joe and Jean Kennedy Scholarship Fund.

During its regularly called meeting, Session and the Board of Deacons:

- Met for a combined meeting, welcoming new officers and thanking those who had completed their terms of service. Each Board heard reports from one another.
- Engaged in a brief training of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- Created a Covenant of Presence together.

## Are You Ready for VCS 2023?



This year's Vacation Church School (VCS) program will take place **June 26–30**, 9 am–3 pm, for children in pre-K (age 4 and potty-trained) through grade 5 (completed). Our theme this summer is *Changemakers Lab*, a place children will learn that everyone can make a difference in the world! Spots are available, but filling fast. Register your kids today!

### Send Supplies

We are doing all kinds of fun science experiments as we explore this amazing world God created. For our science lab, we need egg cartons, wide mouth glass jars (at least 3 inches wide), empty cereal boxes, fabric scraps (the more texture the better), paper towel tubes, clear plastic bottles with lids, and if you have an electric fondue pot, we would love to borrow that too! Look for our VCS donation bin and our growing list of needed items in the Highland Lobby.

### Lend a Helping Hand

We're also looking for teens and adult volunteers to help make our program a success! There will be a training session on **Sun., June 25**, 11 am–2 pm.

Visit [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church) for more details and to register.

## East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

### Staff Leadership

#### **The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy**

*Acting Co-Pastor and  
Pastor for Mission Ministries*  
PatriceFS@coh.net | x230

#### **The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf**

*Acting Co-Pastor and  
Pastor for Educational Ministries*  
HeatherS@coh.net | x221

#### **The Rev. BJ Woodworth**

*Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life,  
Taizé, and Transitional Ministries*  
BJW@coh.net | x241

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#### **Linda Addlespurger**

*Director of Hope Academy*  
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#### **Wil Forrest**

*Coordinator of LGBTQIA+ Ministry*  
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#### **Sara Hackett**

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and Youth Ministries*  
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#### **Dr. Edward Alan Moore**

*Music Director and Organist*  
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#### **Jim Tinnemeyer**

*Director of Administration and Facilities*  
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#### **Rachelle Calfee**

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#### **Megan Leisher**

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#### **Norma Meyer**

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# Pastoral Message

*The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy*

*Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Mission Ministries*



A few years ago, I preached a sermon on liminality—occupying a position at, or on both sides of a boundary, balancing what is with what is to come. In reformed language, we speak of being already and not yet, that is liminal space. Recently, in a daily meditation, Richard Rohr characterized liminality as a place of Holy Transition, a threshold, an “inner state and sometimes an outer situation where we can begin to act and think in new ways.”

This year, Pastors Heather, BJ, and I, have continually bombarded you with messages about the church being in transition, that we, collectively are in a time of discerning and considering how God is moving and calling us into new ways of being. And we recognize that change is difficult for everyone, especially when change does not occur or take place as we anticipated or planned. But I wonder, does anyone ever anticipate or plan change? It seems to be human nature to be comfortable with what is and to respond or react adversely to what is to come. Typically, we do not easily embrace the unknown, accept that change is inevitable, or gracefully surrender our perceived control.

Yet, as people of faith, we continually espouse putting our hope, trust, lives, and futures in the hand of God and yet, we still seek to control many, if not every aspect of our individual and collective lives. There are times when our attempts to control are overt and other times our attempts are covert, although always well-intentioned. But I wonder, even in my own life, what would my present and future look like if or when I turn complete control over to God?

Rohr characterizes times of not being in control or certain as “a graced time, but often it does not feel graced...that the very vulnerability and openness of liminal space allows time for something genuinely new to happen.” As much as we find comfort and contentment in the known, our routine, traditions, and the way we have always done something, being open and receptive to change, new ways of being and doing—ministry, leadership, worship—are compelling and godly.

Rohr writes,

*Without standing on the threshold for much longer than we're comfortable, we won't be able to see beyond ourselves to the broader and more inclusive world that lies before us...we are invited into a real, deep, transformative conversation, there on the threshold between who we are and who we can become, if we are willing to let go of what holds us back.*

Soon, our congregation will receive the results of the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT Scan). I suspect the results will be affirming, unsettling, confusing, and confirming; we will recognize our congregation in many ways and will not recognize ourselves as well. We are occupying liminal space—standing between who we think we are and who God is calling us to be. It is in this space of uncertainty and wonder, of letting go and welcoming anew, that God's grace enters in, and if we let go, new and wonderful, exciting and surprising, nurturing and life-giving holy transition and transformation can happen. May we not be so wedded to what was and who we think we are that we miss the grace-filled opportunity to become more than we could ever imagine or think.

# Mission Matters

The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy  
Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Mission Ministries



## A Note from Casa San José

Thank you for all the warm welcomes, all the people you have impacted, and the opening of your doors to people who came in as strangers and left as welcomed neighbors.

With deep gratitude,

Monica Ruiz, executive director,  
and the Casa Familia.

*Casa San José provided ELPC with a Special Appreciation Award that is on display in the Garth Overlook Room.*

# Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

## Sun., June 4: Pizza in the Park 11:15 am

Families with kids of all ages are invited to gather at the Liberty Green playground following worship. Come make new friends, meet other parents, and enjoy being church together. To RSVP, contact Megan Leisher at [MeganL@coh.net](mailto:MeganL@coh.net). Cheese pizza, drinks, and snacks will be provided. Let us know that you're coming so that we have enough to share!

## Sun., June 11: Youth Feedback for the PNC 11:15 am

The Pastor Nominating Committee would like to hear what the teens of ELPC are thinking and feeling about our church because your voices are an important part of the search for our new pastor. Join us for lunch after worship to give your insights and ask questions. If you want to be part of the conversation, but can't make it to the meeting, let Sara know; we are happy to plan a second conversation. RSVP to Sara at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net).

# Still Thinking About Doing a Mission Trip?



There's still time to register for our summer Mission Trips! Middle school youth in grades 6–8 are heading to Crestfield, **Wed.–Sat., July 5–8**, for summer camp fun and volunteering. High school youth in grades 8–12 are serving with North Street Mission in Wooster, Ohio, **Sun.–Fri., Aug. 6–11**.

Participants in the high school summer mission trip must meet certain requirements, including participating in three service projects with ELPC.

Register online at [ELPC.church](http://ELPC.church) and contact Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net) with any questions.

# Take Climate Action: Electrify Your Home or Car

Home and transportation electrification—coupled with greening of the electricity supply—is the current best strategy on how we can collectively reduce our climate impact. The Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act provides many substantial incentives for homeowners and renters to do so. See [RewiringAmerica.org/IRAGuide](http://RewiringAmerica.org/IRAGuide) for more info. Prepare by planning now, and don't waste an opportunity when an appliance of yours—or your car—needs to be replaced.

The family of Heather and Jim Eng are eager to do just that.

After installing an electric heat pump for their space heating and cooling in 2022, they will tackle converting their electric panel to 200 amps to better support charging EV cars, plan on gas-stove alternatives in the kitchen, and prepare for a heat pump water heater and dryer when their appliances need replacement.



You can keep up to date with their journey by visiting the Environmental Team's bulletin board in the hallway, left of the welcome desk. We also discussed ins and outs on how to best approach these actions at a presentation: [tinyurl.com/42x548yj](http://tinyurl.com/42x548yj). For more info, contact Nancy Heastings at [n.heastings@comcast.net](mailto:n.heastings@comcast.net).

## Thank You, Teachers!

ELPC is blessed with dedicated and gifted teachers who nurture the lives of faith of persons of all ages and stages in their faith development. As our Church School classes conclude for the season, we give thanks to God for our Church School Teachers:

**Sherry Anderson, Damon Bethea, Lora Bethea, Bethany Bray, Trish Buben, Jennifer Castle, Sandy Edgcombe, James Eng, Sara Hackett, Joe Hajdu, Carol Hoehn, Jan Irvin, William Johnson, Heather Lawrence, Nancy Magee, Janice Pressman, Gwen Puza, Kay Shissler, and Dorothea Ward.**

Although Church School has paused for the summer, there will be other opportunities to learn and grow together! And mark your calendars for **Sun., Sept. 10**, when Church School Classes resume on Rally Day!

## The Chapel Market Expands Hours

The Chapel Market is open on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 5–7 pm, and every Thursday, 10 am–12 pm. The Market needs gently used or new spring and summer clothing and shoes in every size for all ages and genders. Men's pants, socks, undergarments, and shirts are especially needed.

As you clean out your closets for the season, consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Chapel Market. Donations may be left in the baskets in the Highland Lobby.

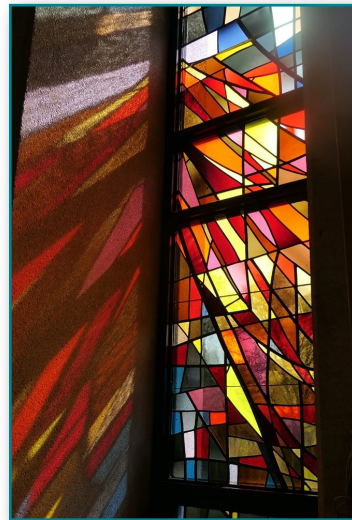
For more information, contact Gerald McClendon, mission coordinator at [GeraldM@coh.net](mailto:GeraldM@coh.net) or **412.441.3800**.

## ELPC Attaining Resurrection Retreat Reflections

On May 5, 13 pilgrims journeyed to Villa Maria Retreat Center in Pulaski for a time of retreat, rest, prayer, reflection in community with God, one another, and the creation. The space was held by the Rev. Jeff Eddings, who led us in a rhythm of prayer, reflection, silence, and communal sharing—morning, midday, and evening. We walked, listened to God and one another, sat under trees, prayed, made art, meditated on scripture, listened to birdsong, laughed, ate, drank, shed some tears, laid some things down, and walked away with simple and personal invitations to practice resurrection in our daily lives. It was and thin and holy space.



Following are some reflections for retreat participants.



One person shared: *"I had burdens on my heart that needed to be grieved deeply. Our time of prayer and reflection followed by long hours of silence gave me that opportunity. By the grace and mystery of God so much heaviness was lifted, and I came away feeling gratitude to the leaders and the participants for creating the space that I needed to attain renewal."*

Another commented: *"It was a weekend of beautiful rest, renewal, and resurrection for body and soul. The prayer, ritual, fellowship, and heartfelt sharing amongst us was transformative. I look forward to continuing opportunities, like this, to 'practice resurrection' with fellow church members and others beyond our immediate church community."*

One final reflection: *"Attaining resurrection—moving from guilt or shame over what we have or have not done for Christ, to a sense of hope, possibility, and excitement of who we are becoming in Christ. We were reminded that suffering and surrendering to the will of God are necessary to pursue this ongoing process. As tools for this purpose, we read poems and reflections of others, along with Biblical scriptures. Through worship, group activities, self-reflection, and communing with nature and each other, we individually and collectively pursued the path of attaining resurrection."*



If you'd like to experience a retreat like this, the Spiritual Life Committee will be hosting another retreat at Villa Maria, **Fri.–Sun., Nov. 17–19**. Mark your calendars!

# LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQIA+ Ministry

## Sharing God's Love at Pittsburgh Pride



ELPC is a proud participant in LAMP (LGBTQIA+ Affirming Ministries of Pittsburgh). We are excited to again celebrate Pride in Pittsburgh this summer. While there are many Pride events sponsored by different groups and

in different neighborhoods around the area, the two Pride events LAMP will be participating this year are:

- **Pittsburgh Pride March and Parade**, coordinated by QBurgh on behalf of Trans YOUning and the Pittsburgh Pride Group on **Sat., June 3**, 12 pm, in downtown and the North Shore.
- We also will participate in **People's Pride PGH March and Festival** on **Sun., June 25**, 11 am, in Swissvale.

Stay tuned for more details that are coming soon. Pride map fliers will be available soon off the Highland Lobby on the counter by the Balaka Room. Come out and celebrate while we share God's love with all God's people!

Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike welcomed and encouraged to attend. Contact Wil Forrest at [Wil@coh.net](mailto:Wil@coh.net) or **412.441.3800 x218**, for more details.

## God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.



## RCC's Annual Pride Concert

Be an LGBTQIA+ ally! Support the Renaissance City Choir (RCC) by attending their annual Pride Concert, *We Dream A World*, **Sat. & Sun., June 10 & 11**, 4 pm, at ELPC!

Every June, all eyes turn toward the LGBTQIA+ community. Corporations change their branding to incorporate rainbows as queer people march, demonstrate, and party in celebration of our community. *We Dream A World* where that celebration and support does not end on June 30.

Join the RCC as we sing for justice and stand up in pride. This year's Pride Concert features selections from *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Kinky Boots*, the 2019 feature film *Harriet*, *Considering Matthew Shepard*, and the *Social Justice Songbook*.

Tickets are available at [RCCpittsburgh.com](http://RCCpittsburgh.com). Sunday's performance also has livestream ticketing and a pay-what-you-can option.

## Calling All Graduates

As school-years come to a close, many members of our church family are celebrating milestone graduations—and we want to celebrate YOU! If you are graduating from high school, vocational-technical school, college, graduate school, etc., send your name, degree earned, and the name of the institution from which you are graduating to Megan Leisher at [MeganL@coh.net](mailto:MeganL@coh.net) by June 30.

## 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 **Erich Harkema & Maxine Erdman**, who were married on April 29.
- **Gerald Savage**, leader of ELPC's Journey Praise Team, was recognized by Mayor Ed Gainey on May 9 for his more than 30 years of service to CAPA, the Pittsburgh schools, and the community.



- **Pastor Patrice** was accepted into Princeton Seminary's Black Theology Leadership Institute, which will run July 16–21.
- Join us in welcoming our new members and friends:
  - **Linda Davis**
  - **Melissa Dunn**
  - **Samantha Gavin**
  - **Judy & JR Ross**

### Prayers

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

- Jason Wilburn and his family on the death of his aunt, Pam Zuidema
- Renee Walker and her family on the death of her mother, Dorothy Walker

*“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.”*

## Sing with the Summer Choir

If you would like to sing with the Summer Choir, contact Dr. Ed at [EdM@coh.net](mailto:EdM@coh.net). Rehearsals are on Sundays, 9 am, and we sing at the 10 am service, June 4–Sept. 3.

## A Message from Your PNC

Your Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) was busy during the month of May working on the first major phase of our pastor search process. We, first of all, want to thank the congregation for your help in completing this first step, the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) Scan. Here, we asked you to complete a targeted survey to give us your thoughts on the congregation’s current condition and directions it should pursue over the next few years.

We now can begin the next phase of our work as we gather with the Session in the coming days to study the CAT Scan results. Additionally, we expect to build on what we learn from the CAT Scan by gathering with congregation members in small focus group/listening sessions over the summer. We plan to use all that we learn to then complete our Mission Information Form (MIF) early this fall.

The PNC appreciates your participation, input, and prayers as we continue this important work for the future of ELPC.

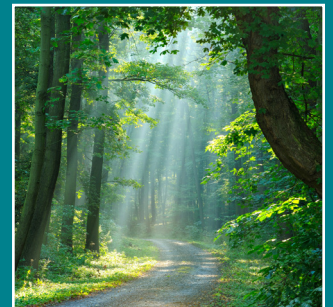
—Doug Booth

*ELPC Pastor Nominating Committee: Doug Booth, Bill Buchanan, David Carl, Andrea DeVries, Jim Eng, Linda Lane (Chair), Rebecca McGregor (Secretary), Polly McQueen, Antwone Wright*

## ELPC Summer Solstice Forest Bathing

Join us on **Sat., June 17**, 9–11 am, to celebrate the summer solstice with forest bathing at Penn Hills Community Park (120 Colorado St., Verona). On this 2-hour walk, you’ll be guided on a gentle, mindful stroll. Leave your stresses behind and connect with the healing powers of nature. Begin one of the longest days of the year with this meditative and relaxing practice!

Forest bathing is more than just hiking, it is an immersive sensory experience that allows you to look at the forest differently than before. It combines concepts of meditation and mindfulness through a series of guided invitations to allow you to relax and enjoy the moment. The walk ends with wildcrafted tea and light snacks.



RSVP to Norma Meyer at **412.441.3800 x211** by **Thurs., June 15**.

Park at the Pavilion. Camp stools will be provided, or you may bring your own chair. In case of rain, please bring an umbrella. Forest Bathing in the rain is absolutely lovely, but the walk will be canceled if thunderstorms are predicted.

Curious about Forest Bathing? Check out a short video at [tiny.cc/forest-bathing](http://tiny.cc/forest-bathing).