



CAT Scan Summary Now Available

Dear ELPC Members and friends,

This spring, East Liberty Presbyterian Church engaged Holy Cow! Consulting to conduct a broad-ranging survey of church members and friends using their customizable Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT Scan). More than 300 people completed the survey. The CAT Scan was recommended by the Presbytery to aid the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) and Session glean insight into the needs, desires, and thoughts of ELPC’s congregation as we search for a new pastoral leadership. We recognize that a survey provides valuable information, but represents only a snapshot in time. This is one of several measures that will be taken in order to discern our path forward in choosing a new senior pastor, and in growing together as a church.



This summer, a team of ELPC Elders—Hollen Barmer, Kristin Cummings, Bob Forloines, Nick Genger-Boeldt, and Carol Mullen, under the guidance of Pastor BJ Woodworth—took on the task of the summarizing the CAT Scan results into a high-level overview document. We are excited to be able to share that document with you in print form (available for pick up in the Church office) and on our website (using the QR code).

We invite you to both read this summary document and join the team of Elders who drafted it—along with Michelle Snyder, the consultant who partnered with ELPC to assist us in interpreting the comprehensive data—for an **ELPC Matters: The More You Know** session on **Sun., Sept. 24**, immediately following our Sanctuary worship service in the Social Hall. You are encouraged to submit questions to the presenters prior to the meeting by contacting Kristin Cummings at kristincummings@gmail.com.

We would like to thank the 301 members and friends who took the time to engage in the CAT Scan. Out of approximately 750 members and friends, this is a significant response. We take your feedback from this survey and through other initiatives to heart as we move into a new chapter of ELPC together as a church.

Your siblings in Christ,

Hollen Barmer, Kristin Cummings, Robert Forloines,
Nicholas Genger-Boeldt, Carol Mullen

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord’s Supper*

Summer Worship | 10 am

Sept. 3* Rev. BJ Woodworth

Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Sept. 10 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sept. 17 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sept. 24 Rev. BJ Woodworth

Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

Sept. 10 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sept. 17 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sept. 24 Rev. BJ Woodworth

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. BJ Woodworth

Rally Day is Here

Sun., Sept. 10, marks the start of our church’s programmatic year. Join us for our vibrant Journey service, 8:45 am, with music leadership provided by our Praise Team; Church School classes for persons of all ages, 9:45 am; and our traditional Sanctuary service, 11 am, featuring music by Dr. Ed and our Chancel Choir.

The Children and Family Ministry Committee will host a continental breakfast beginning at 9:30 am, in the McKelvy Room. Join us before heading to Church School!

ELPC Matters: The More You Know

Join us on **Sun., Sept. 24**, following our Sanctuary worship service, to hear a report on the results of our Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT Scan). And thank you to all who took the time and effort to answer the survey questions.

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

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**East Liberty
Presbyterian Church**

www.ELPC.church

Pastoral Message

The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Mission Ministries



Where did summer go? It seems that with a blink of an eye, June, July, and August whisked by, and planning for the new fall, church season began. It is hard to believe that Pastor Heather and I have been serving as your co-pastors and Pastor BJ has been serving as your transitional pastor for more than a year now. And what a year it has been! We have discerned, discussed, and implemented new ways of being church. And we have learned that despite our anxiousness about what will come next, several things remain constant and true.

ELPC is still a pillar in this community, touching the lives of people who have never set foot in our doors, as well as people and members who do so frequently. We continue to worship every Sunday, sing songs and hymns of praise, pray for our community and ourselves, and hear the Word of God read and proclaimed. We continue to celebrate our traditions—Rally Day, the Church Extravaganza, Advent, Lent, as well as our sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

There is continuity even in the midst of change. Continuity and change are the two things we can and do count on in life. Pauline Keezer, who served as the Secretary of the State of Connecticut (1991–1995) wrote, "Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights." ELPC, we are deeply rooted in Presbyterianism—we are "reformed and always reforming" Therefore, being complacent and satisfied with doing things the way we always have is counter to that which we believe.

Before anyone accuses me of being a heretic, I am not suggesting that I am not suggesting that we discontinue engaging in our traditions that are edifying, worshipful, and glorifying to God. *AND* I wholeheartedly believe that God has given us this time to consider how or whether God is calling us to incorporate new ways of being the church. This is not a call to do more—but a call to prayerfully examine all of our current missions, ministries, and programs, and to seek God's guidance on whether we continue to do what we have always done and the way we have always done things; or is it time for us to collectively seek grow our branches in new or different ministry directions that exemplify the love of God?

So, as we plan for the upcoming fall season and beyond, we covet your input on how we might mutually shake things up. Yes, change is not and should not solely be the work of staff or even Session—we are collectively the body of Christ, and ELPC is a church where everyone is valued and can contribute; a church where everyone is encouraged to actively be involved and to get their hands dirty.

We are a church with deep and wide roots, and the opportunity to change, and to move in different, and new directions will enable us to be relevant and speak to the world in ways that will be received. To move in truncated directions may result in deeper and expanded spiritual and numerical growth. Numerical growth is good, but it is not our ultimate goal. C.S. Lewis wrote, "Mere change is not growth. Growth is the synthesis of change and continuity, and where there is no continuity there is no growth."

As counterintuitive as it may seem, shall we collectively and prayerfully discern how we might live more fully in continuity and change? Isaiah's good news continually wells up in my spirit, "God is doing a new thing, do you not perceive it?" Even God who is unchangeable does new things. Perhaps it is time for us to do the same!

Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

Mission Matters

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

October is Mission Month at ELPC

The Mission Board, the Mission and Spiritual Life Committees, and the Board of Deacons have exciting and informative opportunities and events scheduled. More details to come in October!



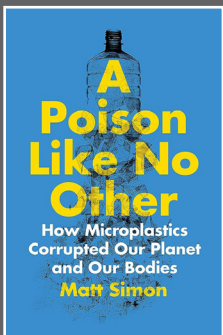
Volunteer with Amen to Action

On **Sat., Oct. 28**, 8:30 am–12 pm, we will be participating (along with other area churches) in packing food boxes for distribution throughout Allegheny County by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The event will be held at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (616 N. Highland Ave., 15206).

This fun event is ideal for adults and school-aged children and we are looking for lots of volunteers. Sign up to volunteer at tiny.cc/amen-to-action.

Environmental Team Selects New Book

For their next book, the Environment Team of the Justice Committee has selected *A Poison Like No Other: How Microplastics Corrupted Our Planet and Our Bodies* by Matt Simon. Consider reading the book and then joining us for a discussion on **Thurs., Nov. 2**, 7 pm. For further information and the Zoom link, contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net.



It's falling from the sky and in the air we breathe. It's in our food, our clothes, and our homes. It's microplastic and it's everywhere—including our own bodies. Scientists are just beginning to discover how these tiny particles threaten health.

Matt Simon is a science journalist for Wired. In his book, *A Poison Like No Other*, he issues an urgent call to action aimed at curbing microplastics in the environment. The book reveals a whole new dimension to the plastic crisis, one even more disturbing than plastic bottles washing up on shores and grocery bags dumped in landfills. Dealing with discarded plastic is bad enough, but when it starts to break down, the real trouble begins. The very thing that makes plastic so useful and ubiquitous—its toughness—means it never really goes away. It just gets smaller and smaller: eventually small enough to enter your lungs or be absorbed by crops or penetrate a fish's muscle tissue before it becomes dinner. The particles never truly disappear.

Microplastics can contain up to 10,000 different chemicals, and many of these chemicals can pose potential health risks.

As Simon learns from his research, there is no easy fix. We will never curb our plastic addiction until we begin to recognize the invisible particles all around us. He notes, "the microplastic crisis is the macroplastic crisis".

Praise, Sing, & Ring!

If you would like to learn more about any of our choirs, email Dr. Ed Moore at EdM@coh.net.

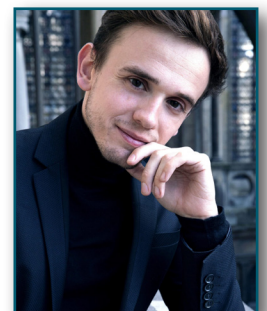
- **Journey Praise Team** sings at our Journey worship service on Sundays at 8:45 am. The choir rehearses on Thursdays, 5:30 pm, beginning Sept. 7.
- **Chancel Choir** sings at our Sanctuary worship service on Sundays at 11 am. The choir rehearses on Thursdays, 7 pm, beginning Sept. 7.
- **Handbell Choir** rings several times throughout the year at our Sanctuary worship service. The choir rehearses on Tuesdays, 6 pm, beginning Sept. 12.



Thomas Ospital to Perform at ELPC

ELPC's *Cathedral Concerts* series will kick off its 13th season on **Fri., Oct. 27**, 7:30 pm, with a performance by organist Thomas Ospital from the Church of Saint-Eustache in Paris.

The concert will be co-presented with the Organ Artists Series of Pittsburgh. Tickets are free for our ELPC community. Contact Dr. Ed for details.



Christian Education

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Educational Ministries

Note: Classes meet on Sundays, 9:45am.

Children & Youth

Our children and youth are deeply spiritual people with great theological questions. To foster these gifts and to help students learn the stories, vocabulary, and actions of the Christian life in a loving community, ELPC offers Church School classes for kids and youth from pre-K-grade 12. Class locations are listed below.

- Pre-K | Nursery
- K–Grade 3 | Room 206
- Grades 4–6 | Room 211
- Grades 7–12 | Second Floor Parlor



Parenting Circle | Room 213

Facilitator: Trish Buben and other class members

Sept. 10, 17, & 24: Starting Our New Year

Anyone involved in parenting is welcome to join us. We share experiences, resources, prayer, and scripture as we explore how our faith builds and nourishes our family lives, as well as nurtures our parent/child relationships.

Anyone involved in parenting is welcome to join us.

Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza, gpuza9@gmail.com

Sept. 10: Future of Faith

At Yale Divinity School, Diana Butler Bass, author of *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*, and Ross Douthat, author of *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics*, discuss the future of religion. Concerning the collapse of religious life in our churches today, Diana Butler Bass says that “conventional, comforting Christianity has failed.” She sees patterns today that are very similar to other periods of great religions change, such as the Protestant Reformation.

Sept. 17: What is Religion? by Karen Armstrong

Karen Armstrong is considered one of the world’s most thought-provoking and original public thinkers on the role of religion in historical and contemporary life. This video discusses how we have inherited historical understandings of God, and how we can come to experience a new awareness of the essence of God and religion.

Sept. 24: White Christian Nationalism: The Realities We Face

This video is amazing to hear. But I trust Diana Butler Bass that what she says, has lived, and has researched is true. She speaks about the values and power of the Religious Right and Christian Nationalism, and how the evangelist movement has changed over the years.

Diana Butler Bass is a leading scholar on American religion and an insightful authority on religious trends in the United States. She is the author of eleven books. Bass earned a PhD in religious studies from Duke University in 1991.

Soul Food | Good Samaritan Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

Sept. 10: Gathering & Preview Session

Sept. 17 & 24: A beginning discussion of our next book, *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship*, by Fr. Gregory Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries.

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

Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Registration is Open for Children and Youth

ELPC programming requires registration forms to be completed for every child and youth participating in our programs. Families can complete ONE form per CHILD that will be used for all ELPC programs—from Church School to **club one sixteen**. You may complete the form online at tiny.cc/elpc-youth-programming, or fill out a paper copy at ELPC on Rally Day, **Sun., Sept. 10**.

Youth Volunteers Needed for Our Church Extravaganza

Teens, can you paint faces, teach cornhole, help with ring toss or a craft, or hand out ice cream? Then we would LOVE your help leading activities for children and families at the Extravaganza on **Sun., Sept. 17**. Let Sara know if you can help and what activity you want to help lead!



club one sixteen

Kids and youth in grades 1–12 are invited to **club one sixteen**, our midweek ministry. We gather each Wednesday, 4:30–7 pm, for Bible Study, games, art, and dinner together. Our first gathering will be on **Wed., Sept. 13**.

For information, email Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

Confirmation Class

ELPC's is offering Confirmation Class for students in grade 8 and up. Confirmation Class is great time for youth to explore what they believe, how they want their faith to shape how they live, and if they want to become a member or friend of ELPC.



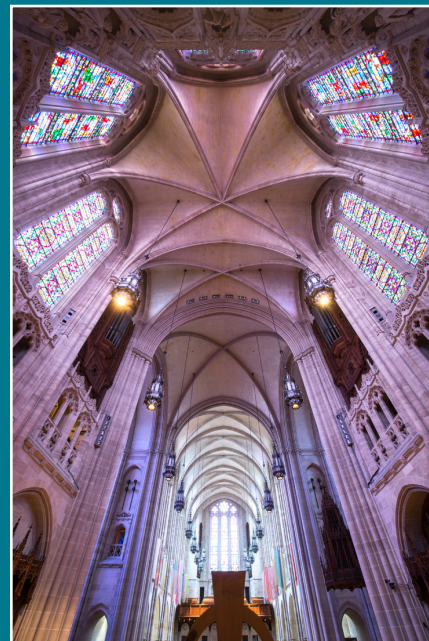
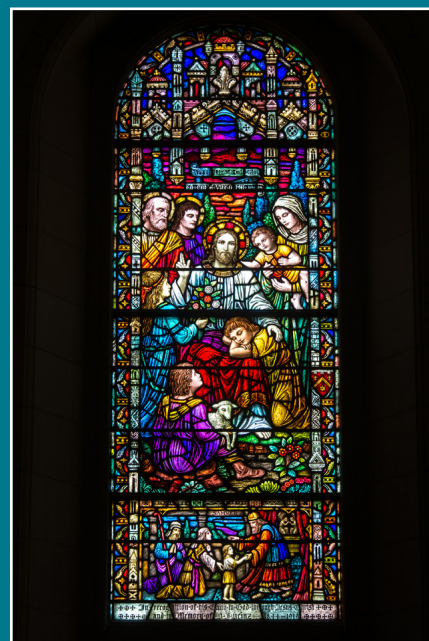
Students who are interested in learning more about Confirmation Class, as well as their parents/caregivers, are invited to an informational meeting following Sanctuary worship on **Sun., Sept. 24**, to discuss the meaning and purpose of Confirmation, review our schedule, and answer questions.

To RSVP for the initial information session and/or to receive a complete schedule, contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

Explore ELPC

Are you interested in learning more about ELPC's history and architecture? Join us in the Highland Lobby following Sanctuary worship on the following dates:

- Sun., Sept. 3: Stained Glass
- Sun., Sept. 17: Sanctuary/Chapel



Fall Solstice Forest Bathing

Join Sandi Miller on **Sat., Sept. 16**, 5:30–7:30 pm, to treat yourself to peace and quiet in the forest. Meet at the fountain at the Frick Environmental Center.

Dinner and a Film

On **Fri., Oct. 27**, 5:30–8 pm, the Spiritual Life and Justice Committees invite you to an evening of fellowship, food, and formation around the ancient practice of Sabbath.

We will gather for a simple meal together and then view the documentary, *SABBATH: An Ancient Practice Meets the Modern World*. The film is told as a collection of short stories, exploring the history of one of the world's most important spiritual practices and its timeless relevance for a stressed-out, modern world.

From the Biblical accounts of Creation, to the 10 Commandments, to the Puritans landing in the New World, to the contemporary practice of a “tech-sabbath,” *SABBATH* ties together our collective history, our health practices, our response to God's invitation, and the search for a more sustainable way of life.

RSVP to Norma Meyer at **412.441.3800 x211** by **Sun., Oct. 22**.

Gratitude Retreat

Mark your calendars now for **Fri.–Sun., Nov. 17–19**, and plan on joining the Spiritual Life Committee for a time of rest, reflection, prayer, conversation, and giving thanks at the Villa Maria Retreat Center in Pulaski, Pennsylvania. Keep a look out for more details.

Presbyterian Women

PW Bible Study: Elizabeth's Sacred Encounter

Tues., Sept. 5 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)

Mon., Sept. 11 7–8:30 pm (Zoom only)

Elizabeth and her cousin, Mary, are the first to receive the message of Christ's coming (Luke 1:1–24; 39–45). The women respond with prophetic praise. Like many of the women in Luke, Mary and Elizabeth are active participants in God's Messianic purposes—not only witnesses.

This sacred encounter challenges us to listen to the voices silenced by biases. God calls us to make ourselves available for God's purpose.

Those attending in person on Tuesday morning are invited to bring a bagged lunch and stay for fellowship after the lesson.

For more information and the Zoom link, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.



Spiritual Life

The Rev. BJ Woodworth, Director of Spiritual Life Ministries

As the ELPC Spiritual Life Committee kicks off the church year this fall, I am excited to tell you about the gatherings we have created to help us all become aware of God's presence in our lives and create space for spiritual formation through simple practices, enabling us to be more open and responsive to the Spirit's leading. Join us for a weekly gathering (listed below) or a one-time event (listed on the left)!

Taizé, Wednesdays, 7–8 pm in the chapel. This fall, our sung prayer and quiet meditation gatherings will focus on meditating on the curious and deep wisdom from the book of Proverbs.

Cathedral Yoga, join Yamuna Morgenstern on Wednesdays, 6–7 pm, in the ELPC Sanctuary or on Zoom as she guides you through gentle yoga poses. No yoga experience is necessary to enjoy the class, which Yamuna offers with joy, and light, and uplifting playlists and spirit.

Monday Morning Contemplative Prayer, re-starting Sept. 18, 7:30–8 am, on Zoom. Join us for 30 minutes of quiet, guided meditation on scripture. This fall, we will be mediating on the Psalms, using the beautiful translation of *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill.

Meditation Hour, Tuesdays, 6–7 pm in the Chapel. Join John Benedict for an hour devoted to meditation—the practice of “looking deeply.” In silence and withdrawal from the world of everyday concerns, we turn our attention inward and calm our bodies and minds. The session will include an opening reading, silent sitting, and walking. No experience necessary, all are welcome.

JourneyDance, third Friday of each month (Sept. 15), 7–8:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Experience one of ELPC's unique spiritual practices and offerings. JourneyDance is about responding to music the way you want to respond. Join us and dance in healthy community to release tension, feel good, relax, restore, and renew your body, mind, and spirit. All ages and bodies are welcome.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry



Sun., Sept. 3: Spiritual Gathering

You are invited to attend our LGBTQIA+ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering following our Sanctuary worship service. Join us and share conversation and lunch. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are welcome to attend!

Questions? Contact Wil Forrest at wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x218.

God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.

News From Your PNC

Hello to you all, my sisters and brothers in Christ and in fellowship. The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) thanks each of you for your prayers as we continue seeking God's guidance in our search for our new pastoral leadership. Keep them coming for us and one another. We hope to hear from all of ELPC.

We thank you for your actions and engagements. We have completed the CAT Scan, which 301 of you submitted responses. On August 6, we held our first listening sessions. Hearing your thoughts and you having the opportunity to expand on the questions in the CAT Scan has been tremendously helpful to the PNC. At this point, we have completed a number of listening sessions...with the potential of more to come. Ultimately, all of this information will allow the PNC to identify the characteristics and qualities that we will value in our future pastor.

The Spirit is moving and working in all of ELPC. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any one of us.

So again, thanks for your prayers, participation, and patience as we move forward. God's Peace and Blessings be with you always.

—David B. Carl

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



Session News

In August, the ELPC Session:

- Received and approved the CAT Scan Executive Summary and communication plan from the working group
- Received and approved the recommendations from the Property Committee regarding the continuation of the Monday building closure and updated COVID protocols
- Approved a recommendation from the Justice Committee on pronoun usage
- Received a report from the Pastor Nominating Committee

ELPC People

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

Good News

- Congratulations to Ashley and Michelle Stiller on the birth of their daughter, **Charlotte Joanne Stiller**
- Join us in welcoming our new members **Brielle and Chad Irving**, and **Sondra MacArtney**

Prayers

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

- Kathy Benninger's mother, Florence Benninger
- Diane Hackett-Harrell (Sara Hackett's aunt)
- Douglas Ross Robinson
- Larry Sweeney

“...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 ELPC building will be closed on **Labor Day, Mon., Sept. 4.**

Church School Offering

This year, our Church School Offering will support students at The Neighborhood Academy by contributing to a scholarship fund.

Keep a look out for more information in your Church School class and future communications to learn how we can support students this year!



Inquirers' Class

Are you interested in becoming part of our faith family? Join us at our Inquirers' Class following Sanctuary worship on **Sun., Sept. 10**, to learn about ELPC's ministries and programs, as well as ways to be involved at ELPC and in our community.

To ask questions or RSVP, contact Megan Leisher at MeganL@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x122.**

Join us for the Church Extravaganza

On **Sun., Sept. 17**, our Membership & Outreach Committee is partnering with our Faith Formation Board to host a church-wide celebration and picnic on Whitfield Ave.

Hot dogs (including vegan), fried chicken, and ice cream will be provided—please bring a side dish to share and/or sign up to volunteer. We need help setting up, serving lunch, and cleaning up. Music will play; church tours will be offered; there will be balloon art, face painting, and games for kids.

Come and learn more about the exciting ministries of ELPC and greet friends both old and new. This is also a great opportunity to invite folks to come check out our welcoming family of faith.

