



EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 412.441.3800 www.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. (Strategic Vision mission statement, 2011)

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 10, 2023 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

Holy God, our hope and strength, by the power of your Spirit prepare the way in our hearts for the coming of your Word, so that we may see the glorious signs of your promise fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRELUDE

"Partita on Winchester New"
Chorale-Meditation-Bicinium-Aria-Trio

Bruce Neswick
Based on Glory to God #96
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, organ

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

* SHARING GOD'S PEACE

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.
People: Y también contigo.

The Rev. Schoenewolf
The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Ashley, Michelle and Charlotte Stiller

Leader: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them.

People: Today we light two candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens. We name the first candle Hope. We name the second candle Peace.

Two candles are lit.

Leader: We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of peace. Even when violence and fear are raging and peace seems like a pipedream, we set our face steadily towards the light.

People: Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of peace this week, help us to become the signs of peace that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of **the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven's peace. Amen.**



* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #104

"O Lord, How Shall I Meet You"

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

* Indicates where you may please rise in body or spirit.

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CALL TO CONFESSION

James Eng

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

James Eng

God of grace, we pray for peace but live as a people divided against ourselves. We cling to the values of a broken world. The profit and pleasures we pursue lay waste to the land and pollute the seas. The fears and jealousies that we harbor set neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom, of intellect and reason, and have turned them into bonds of oppression.

Have mercy upon us, O God; heal and forgive us. Set us free to serve you in the world as agents of your reconciling love made known to us in the Prince of Peace, through whom the fullness of your love dwells.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

James Eng

Leader: Every valley is lifted up; every mountain, made low. Now the glory of God is revealed for the mouth of God has spoken. With joy, let us draw water from the springs of salvation, give thanks to God and call upon God's name. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel!

People: En Jesucristo tenemos perdón. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
¡Alaben a Dios! Praise God!

SUNG RESPONSE HYMN #138 (*stanza 1 and refrain*)

WHITE ROSETTES

"Who Would Think That What Was Needed"

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-11

Heather Eng

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Sara Hackett

Children of any age are welcome to come forward for Moments with our Children.

Children in preschool through grade 3 are invited to the nursery suite for a time of learning together (registration form required). Children younger than age 3 are welcome to attend, if accompanied by their parents. Children will return to the worship service during the Doxology. The nursery is open for play to young children who are accompanied by their parents/caregivers during worship; the service is livestreamed into that space.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Presentation of Children:

Veda Rhodehamel, daughter of Ashley Van Alen and Scott Rhodehamel

Charlotte Joanne Stiller, daughter of Ashley and Michelle Stiller

Profession of Faith

Act of Baptizing

* HYMN #449

"Show Us, O Lord, Your Steadfast Love"

MENDON

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 1:1-8

The Rev. Schoenewolf

SERMON

"Which Comes First?"

The Rev. Schoenewolf

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

The Lord's Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español) or on pg. 45 (한국어) in the Glory to God hymnal.

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

OFFERING INVITATION

Jan Irvin

We offer our gifts in response to God's love, and the grace of Jesus Christ, which we seek to make known through the ministries of this congregation.

You are invited to use the QR code to the right if you would like to make a donation in support of ELPC. A donation box is also available in the Sanctuary.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

arr. Mark Schweizer

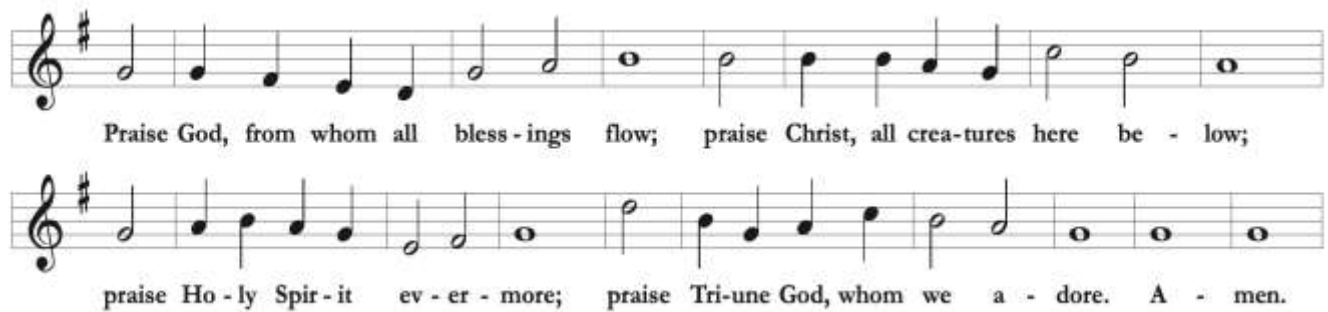
Prepare the way, O Zion, the King is drawing near! Amid the hills and valleys a straighter way is clear. Behold the King of Glory, foretold in ancient story, blest is the Christ who came, in God's most holy name.

The wilderness will blossom, the desert shall rejoice; the blind eyes shall be opened, the speechless given voice; Before him on the mountains, his mercy flows in fountains, blest is the Christ who came, in God's most holy name.

To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend; his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end. He comes to break oppression, to take away transgression, blest is the Christ who came, in God's most holy name.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607

OLD HUNDREDTH



* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy
The Rev. Schoenewolf

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes.

People: Y también contigo.

Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones.

People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.

People: Es justo dar gracias y alabanzas a Dios.

Leader: God of all goodness, fill us with gratitude overflowing that we may share life and love in praise to you. Receive all that we offer and magnify our gifts, so that all will know the peace, hope, joy and love you offer to us in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #106

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

BEREDEN VAG FÖR HERRAN

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Schoenewolf

POSTLUDE

“Partita on Winchester New – Toccata”

Bruce Neswick
Based on *Glory to God* #96
Dr. Moore, organ



As part of ELPC's mission to extend radical hospitality to all, our full worship service is now being livestreamed on Facebook and archived at www.ELPC.church.

This notice is to inform you that by being in attendance, you give permission for incidences where you appear within the video. Should you have any questions, please see one of our pastors.

Please silence all electronic devices before the service begins.

◆ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
Liturgists: The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
The Rev. BJ Woodworth
James and Heather Eng
Sara Hackett
Jan Irvin
Ashley, Michelle and Charlotte Stiller
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore
Organist/Music Director
ELPC Chancel Choir
Beadle: Polly McQueen
Crucifer: Erich Stein
Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

◆ SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP

Coffee and water are available in the Fellowship Room.

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

The flowers today are in loving memory of Miss H. Cornelia McCombs and Mrs. Anna L. Dickey.

If you would like to sponsor flowers for our weekly worship service in honor or memory of a loved one, contact Frances Wilson (wilson.franr@gmail.com). The cost is \$200. *Our beautiful arrangements are provided by Bloom Brigade (www.bloombrigade.com).*

◆ SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:45 am.....Journey Worship. An interactive, energetic service for those seeking a fresh encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Dec 17 — The Rev. BJ Woodworth preaching.

11 am.....Sanctuary Worship. Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.
Dec 17 — The Rev. BJ Woodworth preaching.

◆ WEEKDAY WORSHIP

Taizé: Prayerful Song and Quiet Meditation
Chants and periods of meditative silence modeled after the Taizé community in France. Rev. BJ Woodworth leads this service in the Chapel.

Wednesdays, 7 pm

Note: No service will be held on Dec 27.

Prayer Room (*in Highland Ave hallway*)

Come to sit and pray in silence. Come to experience the quiet in the midst of the wonderful busyness.

Available everyday

◆ WEEKLY SPIRITUAL LIFE OFFERINGS

Contemplative Prayer

Rev. BJ Woodworth will lead a time on Zoom of 30 minutes of communal silence and guided meditation on scripture. We will meditate on the Psalms, using the translation *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill.

Mondays, 7:30 to 8 am

Meeting ID: 959 8065 3992

Passcode: bestill

Meditation Hour

Join John Benedict, retired psychologist and practitioner of insight meditation, in the Chapel for an hour devoted to meditation, which includes an opening reading, silent sitting, and walking. All are welcome!

Tuesdays, 6-7 pm

Cathedral Yoga

Yamuna will lead yoga in-person in the Sanctuary.

Wednesdays, 6 to 7 pm (*before Taizé*)

WELCOME VISITORS!

We are grateful to have you join us for worship this morning and ask you to register your name in our red Friendship Books.

To learn more about our programs, church activities and volunteer services, we invite you to also:

Pick up a copy of our newsletter, the *Reaching Out*, either in the Narthex or at the Hospitality Desk near the Highland Avenue doors.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please contact Megan Leisher for more info (MeganL@coh.net).

Call the Church Office (412.441.3800), or visit the ELPC website at www.ELPC.church.