



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)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 3, 2023 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it.
— Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate

PRELUDE

“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645”

Johann Sebastian Bach
Based on Glory to God #349
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, organ

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

* SHARING GOD'S PEACE

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

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy
The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Dr. Charma Dudley

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. Today we light one candle to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens. We name this candle Hope.

The first candle is lit.

People: We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of hope. Even when better days seem very far away and the weight of the world seems to crush our promises, we set our face steadily towards the light.

Leader: Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of hope this week, help us to become the signs of hope 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 hope. Amen.

People: Let us worship God with a spirit of hope today!

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #100 “My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout”

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN



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

Dec 3 • First Sunday of Advent

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION & INTERCESSION

The Rev. Schoenewolf

God-with-us, even in Advent, we confess that you can seem far away. You are hidden when we need you near. In our hurt, doubt, and fear, we do not try to draw closer to you; instead, we lash out – against you, our neighbor, even those we love. Forgive us, we pray, and come to save us! Let your face shine until our tears are dried, our sins are faded, and our hope is restored. May **we never forget we belong to you, and in your hands, we can be made new. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

TIME OF SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE & FORGIVENESS

The Rev. Schoenewolf

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

People: En Jesucristo tenemos perdón.
¡Alaben a Dios!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Praise God!

SUNG RESPONSE HYMN #90 (*sing 2x*)

“Wait for the Lord”

WAIT FOR THE LORD

HANDBELL ANTHEM

“Meditation in A”

Caleb J. Onstead

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Kings 19:11-12

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Members: Carolyn Bigbee, Matt Dean, Arleigh Dickerson, Daniel Eash, Geeg Eash
Emily Rose Griffith, Jennifer Karius, Jennifer Micelli, Sandra Palumbo
Natalie Robb, Judith Shannon

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.

* HYMN #82

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 13:24-37

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

SERMON

“Stay Woke”

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*from The Book of Common Worship*)

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; for we know that all **things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose.** We are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION

The Rev. Woodworth

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.



Dec 3 • First Sunday of Advent

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Thou Shalt Know Him When He Comes”

Mark Sirett

Thou shalt know him when he comes, not by any din of drums, nor his manners, nor his airs, nor by anything he wears. Thou shalt know him when he comes, not by crown or by gown, but his coming known shall be, by the holy harmony which his coming makes in thee. Thou shalt know him when he comes. Amen.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION

OLD HUNDREDTH



— SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER —

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Rev. Schoenewolf

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Rev. Woodworth

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes.

The Lord be with you.

People: Y también contigo.

And also with you.

Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones.

Lift up your hearts.

People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: Es justo dar gracias y
alabanzas a Dios.

It is right to give God
thanks and praise.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

The Rev. Woodworth

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy and The Rev. Schoenewolf

SHARING BREAD & CUP

The communion elements are gluten-free bread and grape juice. The congregation is invited to come forward by using the center aisle to the communion servers where each may receive the bread and the cup, then returning to their seats via the side aisles to partake of the elements. Those seated in the transepts are asked to join the procession to the front to receive communion by entering one of the pews from the outside and proceed to the center aisle after those seated in the row. Those not able to come forward will be served in their seats.

COMMUNION HYMNS

#312

“Take Us As We Are, O God”

ENDLESS FEAST

#528

“Come, Let Us Eat”

A VA DE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

God, our hope, we give you thanks that you have given us this foretaste of the justice, righteousness, and peace of your promised new creation. Strengthen us with this heavenly food as we seek to serve your holy realm. Lead us to live in joyful expectation of the coming again in glory of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #772

“Live into Hope”

TRURO

* CHARGE & BLESSING

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

POSTLUDE

“Wachet auf – Finale”

Wayne L. Wold

Based on Glory to God #349

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. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
 Liturgists: The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
 The Rev. BJ Woodworth
 Dr. Charma Dudley
 Sara Hackett
 Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore
Organist/Music Director
 ELPC Chancel Choir
 ELPC Ringers
 Beadles: Jo Ellen Aleshire
 Mario Seneca
 Crucifer: Tim Engelhardt
 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 Mr. and Mrs. Chester G. Hall, mother and father of Mrs. Daniel E. Yates.

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 10— The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf preaching.

11 am.....Sanctuary Worship. Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.
Dec 10— The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf 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

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.

TODAY AT ELPC

Giving Tree

Please help families and children have a blessed Christmas by participating in the *Giving Tree*. Sign up at tinyurl.com/ELPC-GivingTree2023

for specific gift requests and to make financial donations to assist with the purchase of retail gift cards. Gifts should be dropped off at the church no later than Sunday, Dec 10.

Advent Devotionals Now Available

The Faith Formation Board is providing *Advent Devotionals* for persons of all ages to encourage us all to pause and **reflect upon God's engagement in our lives during this special season**. Printed devotional materials are available on the information tables here and links are on our website.

Chrismon Trees in Front of Sanctuary

You are invited to view the decorations on the two Chrismon trees more closely, one tree in front of the pulpit and the other in front of the lectern in the front of the Sanctuary. Each ornament is a Christian symbol and was made lovingly by hand some years ago by ELPC members. *Can you find the three angels on each tree that we added this year? Search for angels Kristen, Tamika, and Maria Alicia.*

Church Tour

Join Penn Hackney for a *Stained Glass tour* after today's 11 am service. Please gather in the Highland Lobby to participate. All are welcome!

Holiday Gathering for Young Adults

All young adults (age 18 through 30s) are baking cookies **and building community** after today's 11 am worship service in the Social Hall.

Purchase Café Justo Coffee

Stop by the Highland Ave hallway after the 11 am worship service to purchase a bag of Café Justo coffee. All varieties are available in ground and whole bean bags for \$10 (cash or check only). If you are unable to pick up your coffee in person, contact Ryan Booher (rabooherco@gmail.com).



Blue
CHRISTMAS
worship service
Friday
Dec 8
7 pm

This service will include candlelight, chants, thoughtful readings and meditative silence; and a time for comfort and hope.

Christmas in East Liberty Concert



Friday, Dec 15 • 7:30 pm

This highly anticipated free concert and East Liberty tradition will feature holiday favorites performed by The Brass Roots, ELPC Chancel Choir, organists Dr. Edward Alan Moore and Ethan LaPlaca, and conductor Daniel Nesta Curtis.

Join us in the Sanctuary or virtually on YouTube or Facebook.

Today's Deacons-On-Duty (DOD)

Every Sunday, a DOD (*Deacon-on-Duty*) is available to assist with any emergencies that may occur during our services. The *Journey* service DOD is Hannah Moon. The *Sanctuary* service DOD is Karen Walker.



PW Bible Study: Sacred Encounters — Dec 4 and 5

Please join Presbyterian Women for their Bible Study on Monday, Dec 4 from 7-8:30 pm (Zoom only), or on Tuesday, Dec 5 from 10 am-Noon (hybrid). Those attending Tuesday morning are invited to bring a bagged lunch and stay for fellowship after the lesson. For more info and the Zoom link, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

Christmas Pageant — Dec 10

Join us for a special re-telling of the story of Jesus' birth on Sunday, Dec 10 at 10 am in the Sanctuary. Led by the children and youth of our church and once again written by the Rev. Ashely DeTar-Birt, this original pageant weaves contemporary questions with the Good News of our faith. Following the pageant, all are invited to enjoy a hot chocolate reception in the Fellowship Room!

All kids in grade 8 or lower are invited to participate! There will be a dress rehearsal at 9:30 am on Saturday, Dec 9.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry Gathering — Dec 10

You are invited to the next monthly spiritual gathering of ELPC's LGBTQIA+ Ministry on Sunday, Dec 10 at 12:30 pm to share conversation and lunch. Contact Wil Forrest, LGBTQIA+ Ministry Coordinator, to attend or for more info (Wil@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x218).



As a caring congregation of faith, we ask you to remember the following people in your prayers:

David Carl,

Doris Dick's sister-in-law Kerry,

Peta Harrigan-Cole's brother Tony, and Jeff Parsons.

Condolences to the family of Doug Ahlstedt on his passing.

Condolences to Beth Bush on her mother's passing.

Condolences to Beverly Harris-Schenz on her mother's passing.

*Condolences to Joel and Beth Minnigh
on their sister-in-law's passing.*

No Committee Meetings This Week

Volunteers Needed — Dec 15

The annual *Christmas in East Liberty* concert is on Friday, Dec 15 at 7:30 pm. If you are able to help greet and usher for this event, please contact Dr. Ed Moore (EdM@coh.net). This is one of our largest events each year and our greeters and ushers are always an important part of showing our hospitality to our guests.

Holiday Cookie Potluck — Dec 17

Join us as we celebrate this Christmas season with a *cookie potluck* following 11 am worship on Sunday, Dec 17. Please sign up to contribute your favorite holiday cookies on the sign-up sheets in the Narthex and Highland Ave hallway, or please contact Tim Engelhardt (tim.s.e@hotmail.com). Sponsored by the Spiritual Life Committee.



Christmas Joy Offering to be Received — Dec 17

The *Christmas Joy Offering* celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ, the “perfect gift” from a gracious God, and helps us respond to God's gift with generous gifts that support church leaders—retired, present, and future—who have pointed us to God. When we receive the *Christmas Joy Offering* on Sunday, Dec 17, may you give generously in thanksgiving to God for the most perfect gift of all, the gift of Jesus Christ.

Church Tours — Dec 17 and 31

Jo Ellen Aleshire will lead a tour of the *Sanctuary and Chapel* on Sunday, Dec 17. Tim VanFleet will guide a *Hidden Places* tour on Sunday, Dec 31. Please gather in the Highland Lobby after the 11 am service to participate in either tour. All are welcome!

Confirmation Class Gathering — Dec 17

Our Confirmation Class will meet in the 2nd Floor Parlor on Sunday, Dec 17 from 12:15-3 pm to reflect on worship, dig into atonement theory, and explore scripture. Contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

In our

COMMUNITY



Pittsburgh Youth Chorus Winter Concert — Today

Tickets are now on sale for the Pittsburgh Youth Chorus *Winter Concert* today at 4 pm in the ELPC Sanctuary. Please visit www.pittsburghyouthchorus.org for more info and to purchase tickets.

Writing for Human Rights — Dec 11

Join *Amnesty International Pittsburgh* and many other inspiring Pittsburgh rights groups and community leaders for their annual *Write-for-Rights* event on Monday, Dec 11 from 6–9 pm at Calvary Episcopal Church (315 Shady Ave, 15206).

This year marks the 38th annual gathering in Pittsburgh! During the event you can contribute to writing hundreds of letters on important human rights cases of our time.

Stop in and stay as long as you can. There will be a candle-lighting ceremony about 7:15 pm.

Case information, letter writing materials, and light refreshments will be provided. Attendees are encouraged to wear face coverings while not eating or drinking. Learn more at AmnestyPGH.org.

“Ask the Expert” Offering from the Environmental Team

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee now offers the *Ask the Expert* pilot for the ELPC faith family. Do you have a home project that could benefit from advice on how to make it more environmentally friendly? Maybe you'd like to replace windows and are looking to learn which companies and models are more energy efficient? Or need a water heater replacement, and would like to learn about the government incentives? Or interested in solar? Several people have done these things already and are willing to answer your questions in a phone conversation. *We do not endorse any specific products or services.* Share project details, your phone number, and preferred call times via email to e.team.elpc@gmail.com.

Save the Date: All Church Retreat — May 3 to 5, 2024

ELPC's *All Church Retreat* will be from May 3-5, 2024 at Lutherlyn Camp (Prospect, PA). Whether you join us for the whole weekend or for Saturday only, we will have delicious meals, time to rest in creation, and intentional community building activities. Workshops and worship will be intergenerational. Registration and details soon!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

*There will be no Church School classes on
Sundays, Dec 10, 24, or 31.*