



## Our Lenten Journey Begins

The liturgical season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a day when we name the reality of our own humanness—we are mortal; we all sin; we all have been sinned against. As we hold these truths we are ever mindful, then, of our need for God.

On **Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14**, we will hold three worship services in which there will be the imposition of ashes. See below for more information:

- **12 pm** | Pastor Heather will lead our noontime service in the Chapel.
- **5 pm** | In lieu of **club one sixteen**, Pastor Heather and Sara Hackett will lead an interactive, intergenerational time of worship, which will be followed by a light meal for all participants.
- **7 pm** | Pastor BJ will lead our Taizé Service.

## Lenten Theme: Meeting Jesus at the Table

So much of Jesus' ministry takes place at the table with those he meets. Over a meal, Jesus welcomes, nurtures, forgives, teaches, and serves many. Throughout our Lenten journey together, we will have many opportunities to reflect on this theme in worship, study, devotion, and service.

- **Lenten Soup & Sustenance** | Join us on **Thursdays, Feb. 15–March 28**, 5:30–6:45 pm, to share soup and bread. See page 3 for more details.
- **Food Drive** | During the seven Sundays of Lent, we will be collecting canned goods to be donated to EECM's Food Pantry. Please bring donations to worship so that we might share God's love by feeding our siblings in need.
- **One Great Hour of Sharing** | On Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, ELPC will collect one of our denomination's offerings, called One Great Hour of Sharing. This offering supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promotes development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assists in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. There will be "fish banks" available for children so that all can participate with this offering, as well as devotional prompts throughout the season.
- **Labyrinth** | Our Labyrinth will be available Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 am–2 pm, and Thursdays 5–7 pm, in the Social Hall on the stage. See page 3 for more details.

## Sunday Services

*\*Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

### Journey Worship | 8:45 am

*Theme: Love Unconditionally*

- Feb. 4\* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
- Feb. 11 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
- Feb. 18 Rev. Ralph Lowe
- Feb. 25 Rev. BJ Woodworth

### Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

- Feb. 4\* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
- Feb. 11 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
- Feb. 18 Rev. Ralph Lowe
- Feb. 25 Rev. BJ Woodworth

## Taizé Prayer Service

### Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

*Wednesdays | 7 pm*

Rev. BJ Woodworth

## Celebrating Black History Month

This year's national celebration of Black History Month will place a particular emphasis on **African Americans and the Arts**—exploring the influence and impact of African Americans in all forms of visual and performing arts.

Several events at ELPC invite us to explore and celebrate Black History Month together, and our weekly bulletin announcements will highlight some of the events throughout our community.



## East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

### Staff Leadership

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#### Megan Leisher

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#### Norma Meyer

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East Liberty  
Presbyterian Church

www.ELPC.church

## Pastoral Message

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life, Taizé, and Transitional Ministries



I am writing this on a cold and snowy January afternoon, hunkered down in my home office, feeling the icy chill of winter in my fingers as I type. Winter in Pittsburgh is difficult for me. My heart, body, and soul long for sun, warmth, and the sense of renewal and rebirth that spring brings. Yet, I know I cannot get to spring without journeying through winter.

What can these slow, sometimes dreary, and frosty days of winter teach us human beings? What wisdom can we receive from the indispensable hibernation patterns of brown bears, chipmunks, bumble bees, and marmots? What can we learn from the inclination of trees, flowers, and herbs to willingly let go and embrace a season of repose, stillness, and dormancy? What do our creational siblings teach us about interdependence, connectedness, and limitations?

In her book *Wintering*, Katherine May puts it this way:

*“Plants and animals don’t fight the winter; they don’t pretend it’s not happening and attempt to carry on living the same lives that they lived in the summer. They prepare. They adapt. They perform extraordinary acts of metamorphosis to get them through. Winter is a time of withdrawing from the world, maximizing scant resources, carrying out acts of brutal efficiency and vanishing from sight; but that’s where the transformation occurs. Winter is not the death of the life cycle, but its crucible.”*

Winter is a time of withdrawing from the world...where the transformation occurs, a crucible! I do not know how you experience these winter months, but could you receive it as an invitation to honor your human limitations, slow down, snuggle up, take a long-loving look at what is most real about your own life, this world, and our life together as a church—even if it is painful and hard?

Ash Wednesday is in the heart of winter this year, February 14; a day when we contemplate our own mortality, that we are beloved dust, enlivened by God’s breath and to dust we will return. How might the season of winter help us to prepare to show up to the beginning of Lent as authentically and genuinely as possible? How might the frozen, fallow, resting ground of winter help us to journey with Jesus with openness, strength, and expectation?

As we journey through these often long winter days, may we be reminded of the wintering words of the prophet Isaiah, “...in returning and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength” (30:15).

# Mission Matters

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

## Upcoming Open Hand Ministries Home Renovation Volunteer Workdays

Help us work with Open Hand Ministries (OHM) to renovate their current property at 428 Ardary St., and make it available to a qualified and deserving family! We spent the last few months of 2023 cleaning up the property, and now we're on the construction side, where the house will begin to take shape and look like a home. Our goal is to complete work on this property this summer.

Please join us at one or more of the upcoming OHM workdays:

- "First Saturday" workdays will be **Feb. 3** and **March 2**, 9 am–3 pm (lunch provided). No special skills required.
- Wednesday workdays (ongoing) from 9 am–3 pm (lunch provided).

Join us for as long as you are available. Feel free to dive in and help as you are able. Tools and safety equipment will be provided.

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Frank Bauerle at [frbauerle@yahoo.com](mailto:frbauerle@yahoo.com) or 817.705.6856. And notify Tim Raufer, director of construction, at [traufer@openhandministries.org](mailto:traufer@openhandministries.org) if you plan to participate.

## Lenten Labyrinth Walk and Pilgrimage



During the season of Lent, you are invited to come and walk the ELPC Labyrinth on the stage in the Social Hall, **Feb. 15–March 26**:

- Tuesdays, 10 am–2 pm
- Thursdays, 10 am–7 pm
- Sundays, 10 am–2 pm

The labyrinth is an ancient, sacred symbol found in many religious traditions throughout the world. During the Middle Ages, labyrinths were prominent in numerous cathedrals in Europe, where Christians walked floor labyrinths or traced their fingers along the carved ridges of wall labyrinths. For medieval Christians, the labyrinth was a symbolic pilgrimage: instead of taking a costly and dangerous pilgrimage to Jerusalem, worshipers made a symbolic journey on a cathedral labyrinth.

Today, modern pilgrims walk the labyrinth as one of many ways to pray and meditate. The winding path into the center and back out again is a metaphor for the journeys of life and faith. Unlike a maze, which has many paths and is a puzzle to solve, the labyrinth is a single path in and a single path out and is designed to quiet the mind for prayer and meditation.

ELPC was one of the first churches in the Pittsburgh region to develop a Labyrinth Ministry. The labyrinth has since become an integral part of our diverse, multicultural ministry, and it serves as a bridge for reaching Christian seekers and friends of all faiths.

## Lenten Soup & Sustenance

Join us during Lent on **Thursdays, Feb. 15–March 28**, 5:30–6:45 pm, to share soup and bread (provided). If you'd like to bring a soup to share, contact Pastor BJ at [BJW@coh.net](mailto:BJW@coh.net). And bring canned food items to share with our neighbors who are food insecure.



*"The COVID pandemic taught us a lot about hunger. It reminded us that food isn't just about eating. A meal is in merely consuming the calories needed to sustain life. Food is meant to be shared. Meals are things that bring people together and create relationships. On the one hand, those who live in families had more meals together than we'd had in years. On the other hand, those who live alone experienced the profound absence of companionship—others with whom to share bread.*

*The pandemic also revealed to us that many people in the U.S. are one step away from food insecurity. When so much of the economy shut down in the spring and summer of 2020, people lined up at food distribution sites. Long lines of people in nice cars drove through church parking lots to get a couple bags of groceries. Especially with schools closed and free breakfasts and lunches gone, it turns out that lots of families in this nation live very close to the edge where food is concerned. This is deeply troubling. As one of the richest nations on earth, it just doesn't seem right that so many people could be so close to being hungry. Surely, we can do better. Surely, we want to do better." (Cynthia M. Campbell and Christin Coy Fohr, *Meeting Jesus at the Table*).*



# 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

## Journey with Scripture | Fellowship Room

Facilitators: Rev. Henk Bossers

For the next few months, we will relate both the Psalms and the liturgical calendar's Gospel of Mark with the "Heavenly Hosts." The Scriptures will expand and deepen our understanding of our "Reformed, Ever Reforming" legacy.

## Parenting Circle | Room 213

Facilitator: Trish Buben and other class members

We gather weekly to talk about raising children in our faith. This is an informal time where we can chat, drink our coffee, and share snacks—all while talking about our experiences parenting. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Heather.

## LGBTQIA+ Series | McKelvy Room

Facilitated by ELPC Pastors

### Feb. 4 & 11: What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?

All are welcome to our first-ever LGBTQIA+ Ministry-hosted Christian Education hour. We will examine what the Bible does and does not say about homosexuality. This series will be led by our pastors. We hope you can make it!

## Soul Food | Good Samaritan Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

We will discuss chapters 7-14 of our current book, *Between the Dark and the Daylight: Embracing the Contradictions of Life*, by Joan Chittester.

New participants are always welcome! For more information, please contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu at [hajdu625@comcast.net](mailto:hajdu625@comcast.net).

## Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza, [gpuza9@gmail.com](mailto:gpuza9@gmail.com)

### Feb. 4: Freedom House Ambulance: The FIRST Responders

In 1967, Pittsburgh's inner city produced America's first EMT service. Comprised solely of Black men and women recruited from the city's Hill District neighborhood, the paramedics of Freedom House Ambulance became trailblazers in providing pre-hospital and CPR care. Freedom House was initially conceived to respond to the needs of the city's African American community who often couldn't rely on police and fire departments during an emergency. Their ground-breaking work became the basis for all paramedics training in the country. However, despite its success, racism and power dynamics in Pittsburgh shut down Freedom House in 1975, leaving its legacy almost lost to history.

### Feb. 11: Sojourner Truth's Life and Legacy

In this video, Claudine Ferrell discusses the life and legacy of Sojourner Truth, an enslaved woman who self-emancipated in 1826 and became a speaker on abolition and women's rights. Ms. Ferrell is a History professor at the University of Mary Washington.

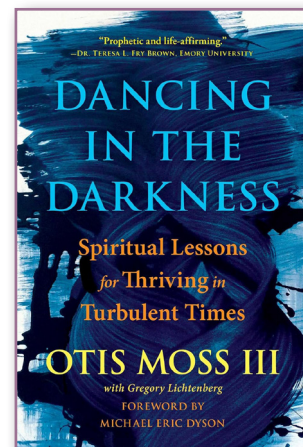


### Feb. 18: Working Theology for Black Lives Matter

The Rev. Dr. Asa J. Lee, president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, will be with us in person. Drawing from John 1:1-14, Rev. Dr. Lee will discuss a working theology for Black Lives Matter. What does "and the Word became flesh and lived among us" mean in the context of this important social movement?

### Feb. 25: Dancing in the Dark

Rev. Otis Moss, successor to Rev. Jeremiah Wright as senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, spoke with Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) about his book *Dancing in the Darkness*, as well as overcoming the political and spiritual challenges of today.



# Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry



## Sat.–Sun, Feb. 24–25: Tween Retreat

Youth in grades 4–6 are heading to Crestfield Camp with youth from churches all around Pittsburgh. Our one-night retreat together will be filled with crafts, worship, games, campfires, music, silliness, and thoughtful questions.

We will meet at ELPC on Saturday, 8 am, and return on Sunday, 12 pm. The cost is \$85 (scholarships are available).

More info, last year's video, and registration information is available online.

Any parents who are interested in joining the fun by chaperoning should contact Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net).

## Sun., Feb. 25: Serving Breakfast at EECM

Our Teen Church School class (youth in grades 7–12) will be serving breakfast at East End Cooperative Ministry. Reach out to Sara Hackett for more details.

## club one sixteen

Kids and youth in grades 1–12 are invited to **club one sixteen**, our midweek youth group ministry, on Wednesdays, 4:30–7 pm. We have three groups based on age and everyone gets dinner, games, meaningful Bible study and time to make friends. Come check it out!

**Note:** **club one sixteen** will not meet on **Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14**. Instead, youth and their families are invited to an interactive, intergenerational time of worship, which will be followed by a light meal.

For more information, email Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net).



## Mark Your Calendars for VCS

Our annual Vacation Church School will be held the week of **June 24–28**. Whether you have a child in pre-K (age 4 and potty-trained) through grade 5 (completed) who would like to come as a camper, or you're a youth or adult who would like to volunteer, make sure to mark your calendar now!

## Baking Valentine Cookies for Dogs

Children, youth, and families are baking and decorating dog treats following Sanctuary worship on **Sun., Feb. 11**, 12–2 pm, in the Good Samaritan Room. We'll be making peanut butter dog treats for Ellie's Pet Pantry, a program at Humane Animal Rescue. Pups and their humans will be thrilled to receive the homemade treats and the love we will put into them! This event is open to children of all ages with a parent/adult and youth in grades 4–12 may come on their own. Lunch from Chipotle will be provided.

Questions? Contact Sara Hackett at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net).



## Confirmation Class Overnight Retreat

Our Confirmation Class will meet at ELPC **Sat.–Sun., Feb. 17–18**, for an overnight retreat to talk about what it means to be a member of the Church, the PC(USA), and ELPC. We'll gather on Saturday, 4 pm, and wrap up on Sunday, 9:45 am.



## All-Church Retreat

ELPC's All-Church Retreat will take place **Fri.–Sun., May 3–5**, at Lutherlyn Camp in Prospect, Pennsylvania. 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 so you can get to know old friends better and meet new friends, too. Workshops and worship will be intergenerational.



Want to help us plan the details? Reach out to Sara Hackett by emailing at [SaraH@coh.net](mailto:SaraH@coh.net). Registration will open in February.

## Sunday Social Hour



Join us after worship on **Sun., Feb. 18**, for a Social Hour hosted by the Environmental Team of the Justice Committee. Climate is an urgent issue of our day. Hear about recent climate news and share your thoughts about environmental issues—along with your priorities for ELPC. Your contribution is important to help the Environmental Team focus its efforts. Enjoy good food, warm drinks, and lively conversation!

## Presbyterian Women

### PW Bible Study: A Person with a Physical Disability

**Mon., Feb. 5** 7–8:30 pm (Zoom Only)

**Tues., Feb. 6** 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)

In the first century Greco-Roman world, children born with impairments were considered to be “unwanted by the gods.” In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus teaches the disciples that the reign of God includes people on the margins, especially people with disabilities. After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit accompanied the disciples in continuing the work Jesus had begun. In this lesson (Acts 3:1–10), Peter and John heal a 40-year-old man who had been unable to walk since birth. These ordinary people did extraordinary things by invoking the name of Jesus Christ.



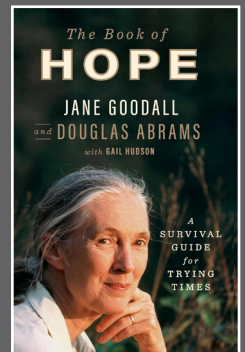
Those attending in person on Tuesday are invited to bring a bagged lunch and stay for fellowship after the lesson. Beverages provided. For more information and the Zoom link, email [PW.ELPC@gmail.com](mailto:PW.ELPC@gmail.com) or visit [ELPC.church/events](http://ELPC.church/events).

## Environmental Team Book Discussion

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee is reading two books written by two important women scientists. Read one or both and join the discussion on **Thurs., Feb. 8**, 7 pm, on Zoom. For more information, contact Nancy Heastings at [n.heastings@comcast.net](mailto:n.heastings@comcast.net).

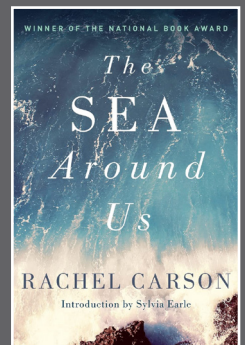
### *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times*

is a new book from Jane Goodall, the famous living naturalist. In her book, Goodall focuses on her *Four Reasons for Hope: The Amazing Human Intellect, The Resilience of Nature, The Power of Young People, and The Indomitable Human Spirit*. Looking at the headlines—a global pandemic, the worsening climate crisis, political upheaval—it can be hard to feel optimistic. And yet hope has never been more desperately needed. She states, “We are going through dark times. Hope is what enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. It is a stubborn determination to do all you can to make it work.”



*The Sea Around Us* (1951) by Rachel Carson, a marine biologist, is a gracefully written, meticulously researched work of nonfiction making the case for the primacy of the oceans, a plea that has gone unheeded.

She tells the history of our oceans, combining scientific insight and poetic prose as only she can, to take us from the creation of the oceans, through their role in shaping life on Earth, to what the future holds. Carson’s book provides a timely reminder of both the fragility and the centrality of the ocean, and the life that abounds within it.



# LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry



## Sun., Feb. 18: Spiritual Gathering

You are invited to attend our LGBTQIA+ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering following our Sanctuary worship service. Join us and share lunch and conversation. A Zoom option will be offered only if expressed need is shared with Wil prior to the Friday before the gathering. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are welcome!

Questions? Contact Wil Forrest at [wil@coh.net](mailto:wil@coh.net) or 412.441.3800 x218.

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

### LGBTQIA+ Church School Series Continues

All are welcome at our first-ever LGBTQIA+ Ministry-hosted Christian Education hour on **Sun., Feb. 4 & 11**. We'll be examining what the Bible does and does not say about homosexuality. This series will be led by our pastors in the McKelvy Room. We hope you can make it.

## February PNC Updates

Dear ELPC Members, Friends, and Staff,

The PNC has been getting back into the swing of things after a short break over the holidays. In January, we prepared for the first round of initial interviews with candidates by developing questions and interview protocols. Our interviews are centered around priorities that emerged from the congregation's responses in the CAT Scan and in our Listening Sessions. We hope these initial interviews will allow us to get to know the viewpoints of the candidates and determine who possesses the qualities that our congregation is looking for in our new pastor.

We are grateful for the guidance of the congregation in clarifying our goals and mission as a congregation, and know that this knowledge will lead us to a fitting pastor for our church. Thank you for the continued support and prayers. We appreciate having the congregation behind us as we continue this process.

—Antwone Wright

*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 January, Session set goals for our work together in 2024, approved the Covenant Pastor Contract with Pastor BJ, and reviewed the terms of call for our installed clergy in advance of the Congregational Meeting.

## ELPC People

If you have news to share, contact Megan Leisher at [MeganL@coh.net](mailto:MeganL@coh.net) or 412.441.3800 x122.

### Prayers

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

- Gil Hickman's brother Alvin

## Connections @ Blues is the Roots

Join ELPC's Connections Group on **Sat. Feb. 10**, 7:30 pm, for **Blues Is The Roots**, presented by New Horizon's Theater, written by Charles Dumas, and directed by Herb Newsome. The performance will be in the Helen Wayne Rauh Rehearsal Hall at the O'Reilly Theater (621 Penn Ave.) downtown in the Cultural District.



Tickets are available online at [newhorizontheater.org](http://newhorizontheater.org). Please buy your own ticket in advance. They cost \$35 general admission; \$30 for seniors and students. Please RSVP to [connectelpc@gmail.com](mailto:connectelpc@gmail.com) so we'll know to look out for you. We also can organize dinner at a nearby restaurant before the show.

*“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.”*

## Building Closure

ELPC will be closed on **Presidents’ Day, Mon., Feb.19.**

## Congregational Meeting Notice

Session has called ELPC’s Annual Congregational Meeting for **Sun., Feb. 25**, following Sanctuary worship in the Social Hall. A light lunch will be provided.

Childcare and activities for school-age children will be available during the meeting.

Our annual report and meeting materials will be available online, and hard copies will be available on the information tables on the first floor, and at the meeting.

## Singing Our History



ELPC’s *Cathedral Concerts* series continues on **Sun., Feb. 25**, 3 pm, with *Singing Our History*, a special performance commemorating Black History Month with with Robert Ray’s timeless Gospel Mass and Women’s History Month with choral and solo works by women composers and arrangers.

The concert is free.

## Lift Every Voice

On **Sat., Feb. 3**, 7 pm, join the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and special guests for an evening that pays tribute to the spirit and richness of Black music in America. The concert features GRAMMY® Award winner Oleta Adams and the Lift Every Voice Unity Choir.

Learn more and buy tickets at [PittsburghSymphony.org](http://PittsburghSymphony.org).

## Save the Date: Necessary Risks

Anyone who seeks a more just and equitable world is invited to a day of worship, learning, discussion, and good food on **Sat., March 9**, 9 am–3 pm.

Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott will be our guide. She is the author of *Necessary Risks*, which grew out of her experiences as a college chaplain and volunteer at a men’s prison. Her work is informed by authors, theologians, and scholars of color. She is the editor and publisher of *Presbyterian Outlook*.



This gathering is sponsored by Presbyterian Women. For more information, email [PW.ELPC@gmail.com](mailto:PW.ELPC@gmail.com).