

Holy Week and Easter at ELPC

Holy Week begins with our celebration on **Palm Sunday, March 24**. We will remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem as we wave palm branches in both services, and begin our Sanctuary service with a Palm Processional, led by the children of our church. Pastor Heather will preach.

Taizé Stations of the Cross, Wednesday, March 27 | 7 pm

Pastor BJ will lead a special Taizé service as we journey through the 14 traditional Stations of the Cross, with readings, sung prayers, and silence.

Maundy Thursday, March 28 | 7 pm

Join us in the Sanctuary as we remember Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples as they celebrated the Passover Feast together. We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper together. Pastor Heather will preach.

Good Friday, March 29 | 12 pm & 7 pm

Join us to remember the passion and crucifixion of Jesus, with gratitude for the grace of God in Christ. Pastor Heather will lead a service in our Chapel, 12 pm. Pastor Patrice will lead a Tenebrae service in our Sanctuary, 7 pm.

Easter Vigil, Saturday, March 30 | 7 pm

Pastor BJ will lead this processional vigil, beginning on the Penn Ave. steps. The procession will move into the Narthex and Sanctuary, culminating in the celebration of the first Holy Communion of the Easter season.

Easter Sunday, March 31 | 8:45 am & 11 am

We will rejoice as we celebrate Jesus' Resurrection. We will sing *Alleluia* once more, praising God for the saving work of Jesus and the new life he has won for all. Pastor Patrice will preach at our Journey and Sanctuary services, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated.

There will be no Church School on Easter Sunday. All are invited to join us for a continental breakfast between services.



Lenten Soup & Sustenance

Join us during Lent on **Thursdays through 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. And bring canned food items to share with our neighbors who are food insecure.

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Theme: Transformed by Grace

March 3* Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
 March 10 Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott
 March 17 Rev. BJ Woodworth
 March 24 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
 March 31* Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

March 3* Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
 March 10 Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott
 March 17 Rev. BJ Woodworth
 March 24 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf
 March 31* Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. BJ Woodworth

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

On Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, ELPC will collect one of our denomination's One Great Hour of Sharing offering. This offering helps 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.



East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

Staff Leadership

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

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**East Liberty
Presbyterian Church**

www.ELPC.church

Pastoral Message



The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Educational Ministries

This Lenten season, we are following a Devotional titled *Meeting Jesus at the Table*. As you have seen, we are carrying this theme into worship each week; we will gather at the table on Thursday evenings to talk, eat, and reflect together; we will consider those who are hungry and collaborate to offer food to those in need.

And so I've been thinking about those I meet at the table, and have been reflecting on how it is that I show up to the table when others, and Jesus, meet me.

I wish I could say that I always come to the table with locally sourced organic ingredients, a delicious recipe, and the artistry to make a meal tailored to the needs of those gathered at the table. I wish I could say that I am confident in my own skill to feed others through the food I prepare. But I'm not. Although I'm past the season of my life when I burned water on the stove, I'm still not the best cook. It feels like a shortcoming—like something I SHOULD be able to do with greater ease and joy—like I'm letting people down.

But then I realized that when we gather at a meal table, there are many roles we each fill—at times interchangeably, at times, all at once. At times we are a guest, and at other times we are the host. At times we are hungry and at other times full. At times we are on the “inside” of those gathered around the table, and at other times we are one of the “outsiders” trying to fit in.

When I meet others at the table, I am usually...

- ...the one who is last to the table.
- ...the one who sits near the young kids and plays iSpy.
- ...the one who cuts up the food of those whose hands are too small or too weak to do so themselves
- ...the one who makes sure that everyone is included in the conversation.
- ...the last one who is done eating.

And this is OK.

We all have a role to play as we approach the table together—whether we pull up a chair for a latecomer or pour ice water for someone who is thirsty. We have a role to play at the table even if we show up exhausted and hungry and in need of some tender care.

The important thing is to show up. And if our Gospel lessons tell us ONE way to show up to the table it is to come to the table as our most authentic selves—to be honest about our grief, regrets, needs, anger, questions, worry, and our hope. Here we meet Jesus. Here we meet one another. Here we are formed and fed—as individuals and as a family of faith.

I pray that throughout this Lent, you approach the table with a readiness to meet Christ—and to notice Jesus within you and in the witness of those with whom you eat. May you feel welcome, seen, nourished and loved, always.

Pastor Heather

March PNC Updates

Your Pastoral Nominating Committee is very grateful and excited to have entered another phase of our work. After submitting our Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) to the PC(USA) late last year, we began receiving referrals from the PC(USA)'s system of individuals who matched our MDP, as well as independent inquiries. Since then, we have been engaged in screening those candidates and inviting some to formally apply. And last month, we began interviewing candidates on Zoom.

This process of screening and interviewing invited applicants will continue as we receive more matches from the PC(USA) and hear from pastors who have become aware of our opening via our social media and online job posting efforts.

We ask you, yet again, to continue to keep us and our efforts in your prayers. We have every confidence that God will lead us to the right individual. We would also like to ask you to help us spread the word about our pastoral opening to your friends and family. Thank you all for walking with us and supporting our work.

—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

Mission Matters

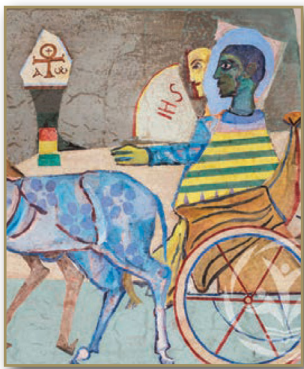
*The Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Mission Ministries*

Sat., March 2: Open Hand Ministries Workdays 9 am–3 pm

Join us for our “First Saturday” home rehab workday with OHM, and come help every Wednesday, 9 am–3 pm. Lunch, tools, and safety equipment will be provided. Questions? Contact Frank Bauerle at frbauerle@yahoo.com.

Presbyterian Women

PW Bible Study: An Ethiopian Eunuch Encounters the Good News of Jesus



Mon., March 4 7–8:30 pm (Zoom Only)

Tues., March 5 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)

Philip's encounter with an Ethiopian finance minister (Acts 8:26-40) is a story of the Holy Spirit at work. Moved by the Spirit, Philip took the wilderness road to Gaza where he overheard the Ethiopian reading the prophet Isaiah. Prompted by the Spirit, Philip talked with the unnamed man about how Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy. Through such encounters, Christianity expanded into Africa. How do we share what we believe? Why is knowing the Word important to expanding the reign of God?

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.

Session News

In February, Session voted to receive three new members, approve the baptisms of four children, review a draft of new Session/Committee Handbook, and establish goals for throughout 2024.

Updating Our Church Directory

If you would like to update your photo and/or contact information, please email Megan Leisher at MeganL@coh.net with your new information or complete a member update form found on the website or at the church. Send photos as JPEG or PNG files in portrait orientation with up-close focus on faces and minimal background distractions. Submissions are due **Sunday, March 31**.

All-Church Retreat: ELPC Block Party

Join us at our All-Church Retreat **Fri.–Sun., May 3–5**, at Lutherlyn Camp in Prospect, Pennsylvania! Get to know your neighbors—those who are a part of our faith family, and those who are a part of our larger world—and explore together how we might faithfully answer God's call to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. We will gather in true “Block Party” style—with food, games, and fellowship. We will learn about God through worshiping and playing together.

Visit our website to review the retreat brochure, sign up for workshops, and learn about all of the details.

Christian Education

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

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

Combined Adult Class on March 10

The Rev. Dr. Teri Ott will lead a combined class, and then preach at our Journey and Sanctuary worship services. Rev. Dr. McDowell Ott has been a Presbyterian minister for more than 25 years. She served Monmouth College as chaplain and later as dean of the Chapel. At Monmouth, Teri built a vibrant and diverse religious and spiritual life ministry; she also created an educational outreach program with the local men's prison. Teri is the editor and publisher of *Presbyterian Outlook*, the only independent publisher of the PC(USA).

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. Questions Contact Pastor Heather.

Soul Food | Good Samaritan Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

March 3, 17, & 24: Between the Dark and the Daylight

We will discuss chapters 15-20 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.

Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza, gpuza9@gmail.com

March 3: Marcus Borg: Is the Easter Story of Jesus's Resurrection Factual or Metaphorical?

Marcus Borg (New Testament scholar and theologian) and the Rev. Charlie Holt (rector at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Jacksonville, Florida) debate the meaning of Jesus' Resurrection. Borg says we can believe whatever we want about what happened, and asks, now can we talk about what that meant? He sees that the story of the Resurrection means two things: that Jesus continued to be experienced as a figure in the present—not just a memory of the past—and that Jesus is Lord. What is added by saying that Jesus' corpse was transformed?

March 17: The Great Resurrection Debate

In this video, William Lane Craig and John Shelby Spong discuss and debate whether the Resurrection was a real, physical event.

Nothing is more central to the Christian doctrine than the reality of Christ's Resurrection. Bishop Spong states that the Resurrection "...is not just an historical event that happened over 2000 years ago. Rather, it is available and eternal to every generation. Our human language is not enough to capture the reality of that inbreaking of eternity." Bishop Spong takes the language of eternity seriously, not literally.

Bishop Spong, whose books have sold more than a million copies, was the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark for 24 years before his retirement in 2001. William Lane Craig is an American analytic philosopher, Christian apologist, author, and Wesleyan theologian

March 24: Why Atonement Theology will Kill Christianity

Where did the idea come from that human beings are born in sin, that we are fallen creatures? The Jesus story has been told in terms of that idea, that Jesus died for our sins, as required by the Father.

In this video, Bishop John Spong states that there was no fall from perfection, that we are not fallen creatures, but that we are incomplete still-evolving human beings. We do not need to be saved, but to be empowered to become all that we are capable of becoming. We need to tell the Christ story that is relevant to that diagnosis of our humanity.

No Church School on Easter Sunday

There will be no Church School classes on **Easter Sunday, March 31**. Classes for people of all ages will resume on Sunday, April 7.

Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Sun., March 10: Tween Scavenger Hunt 12:30–2 pm

Youth in grades 4–6 will be dusting off the Polaroid cameras for a scavenger hunt around East Liberty. RSVP to Sara Hackett

Fri., March 22: Every Kid's Birthday Party at the Toy Lending Library 5:30–7:30 pm

The Children and Family Ministry team is hosting a Birthday Party for families with kids at the Toy Lending Library (5401 Centre Ave. 15232). If you would like to help plan the birthday party or bring a game or treat, please let Sara know.

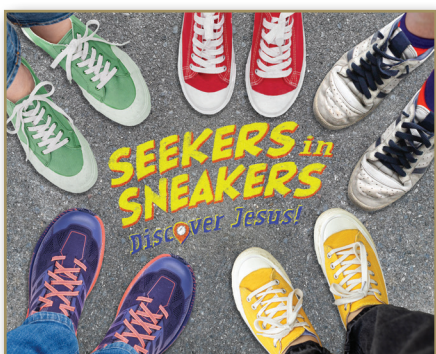
The Children and Families Ministry team is hosting monthly family events to foster a caring community of families at East Liberty Presbyterian Church where kids and adults feel loved and empowered to explore their faith.

Thurs., March 28: Volunteer at World Vision 12–5 pm

Youth in grades 7–12 can volunteer at World Vision in Sewickley. We will have pizza for lunch, work in the distribution warehouse preparing donations to be shipped to needy individuals throughout the world, and then get ice cream to celebrate our work. World Vision helps keep new merchandise out of landfills and gets it to folks affected by disasters. The work is important and always fun sorting, folding, and counting. RSVP to Sara Hackett.

VCS Registration is Open

Vacation Church School at ELPC will be held June 24–28, 9 am–3 pm for children in pre-K (age 4 and potty-trained) through grade 5 (completed). Our theme this summer is **Seekers in Sneakers: Discover Jesus!** and children will use their investigative skills to discover Jesus and explore the stories of those who experienced and brought about change in the world around them after an encounter with Jesus.



Geocaching activities will challenge children to dig into the Bible to find the way to Jesus. This journey of discovery has many twists and turns, so children will learn to ask questions, work with others, shine their light in the world, follow Jesus' example of serving others, and trust Jesus when things go wrong. Through worship and drama, Bible study, art, and science explorations, and active games, children are invited to follow the example and teachings of Jesus in

every place and every part of life. So grab your water bottle, your Bible, and your friends, because this is going to be a great adventure!

Youth in grades 6–12 are invited to serve as volunteers, and adult volunteers of all ages will be needed to help ensure our program is a success!

Campers and volunteers can register at ELPC.church.

Placemat Devotionals

We have pulled themes from our Lenten Devotional Book, *Meeting Jesus at the Table* by Campell and Fohr and created placemats that you can use during a meal to spark faith conversations this Lent. We suggest picking up enough for everyone at your table! Together, you can read scripture, answer questions about your experiences and feelings, complete activities that connect the Bible to everyday life, and pray for those around God's table. Placemats are in baskets in the Narthex, Social Hall, and Highland Lobby.



Confirmation Class

Our Confirmation Class will meet in the Second Floor Parlor after Sanctuary worship on **Sun., March 17**.

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, & dinner together.

Note: We will not gather on **Wed., March 27**.

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

A Wintering Poem

Stand at the crossroads
Hear the ancient bell toll
Take a deep breath
Slip off the log of productivity
into the darkness
of the warm mystical mucky bottom

Bury yourself
Pull into your shell
Settle into the stillness
Slow...almost to stopping

Don't defer
Don't fight
Don't pretend
Don't ignore

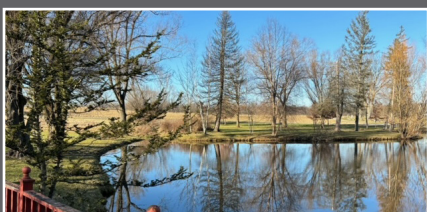
Prepare
Adapt
Metamorphosize
Withdraw
Be brutally efficient
with your scant resources
Vanish from sight

Reflect
Recuperate
Replenish
Rest
S L O W L Y.....
Let you spare time expand
Get enough sleep

Stop wishing for summer
Don't believe the lies
this is not silly
a failure of nerves
a lack of willpower

Shed the ego skin
Expose painful nerve endings
Feel oh so raw
it's full bite

Stand at the crossroads
Hear the ancient bell toll
Choose not when, or if,
but how
to winter.



Spiritual Life

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life, Taizé, and Transitional Ministries

A Wintering Retreat Reflection

In early February, 20 brave pilgrims headed out on a Wintering Retreat to be quiet, still, and pray in community with one another to remind ourselves that it is "in returning and rest we are saved, and that quietness and trust is our strength" (Isaiah 30:15). Together, we practiced a simple rhythm of gathering in community for meals and fixed hour prayer, and then scattered into the open, spacious, and beautiful time of wondering and wandering into solitude and silence. There also may have been a spontaneous, Spirit-led, dance party on Saturday night.

I am always amazed at how the simple act of retreating from our everyday, ordinary lives and have no agenda other than to be present to God, yourself, and one another restores our souls.

As Jeff Parsons reflected, "There are few activities more satisfying in life than choosing to spend a weekend away from our 'normal' lives, and allowing the Spirit of God to forge new relationships (and strengthen existing ones) on a retreat. Villa Maria Retreat Center provides just the right place. Beautiful facilities, an outdoor labyrinth, woodland and wetland trails, and lots of quiet spaces for meditation. Our discussions, our prayers, our meals, and our solitude all worked together to bind our hearts closer to God, and closer to each other. While snow would have been nice for a Wintering Retreat, it certainly wasn't necessary for a very special weekend."

I hope you will join us for one of our Spiritual Life Committee's upcoming retreats.

Sat., June 1: Attending to Wilderness: A Day Retreat Exploring Our Inner & Outer Landscapes | This day-long retreat will be focused on contemplation in nature, facilitated by Megan Shelly of bewilderpgh.com.

Fri.-Sun., Sept. 27-29 | Join us at Villa Maria Retreat Center for a time facilitated by Lynn Holden, topic TBA.

In closing I offer you my own personal reflection through a poem I wrote while on the Wintering Retreat (on the left).



LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry



Sun., March 17: Spiritual Gathering

You are invited to attend our LGBTQIA+ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering following Sanctuary worship. 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 or 412.441.3800 x218.

God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.

Want to Show Your ELPC Pride?



We're selling ELPC rainbow tie-dye t-shirts. The front says "East Liberty Presbyterian Church" and the back says "God created you. God loves you. Be yourself." They're perfect for upcoming June Pittsburgh Pride marches or for wearing around as you share God's love for all in a colorful, stylish way. Shirts are available in short- and long-sleeve options, in sizes ranging from S-4XL.

Purchase one at tiny.cc/elcpride from **March 1-17**, for \$16 (\$15 plus a convenience fee) paid by credit card, or in person right after our Journey and Sanctuary services on **Sunday, March 10**, for \$15 paid via cash/check.

You will be contacted when the shirts are ready for pick up at the church. For more details, please contact Wil Forrest at Wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x218.

RCC Announces Cabaret 2024



The RCC continues its homage to the natural elements this season with its **Cabaret 2024: Earth, Wind, & Choir** on **Sat., April 6, 7:30 pm**, and **Sun., April 7, 2 pm**, at ELPC.

This concert highlights the grounding force of the earth, the motivating power of the wind, and the boundless joy of joining together in song. You'll "Feel the Earth Move" with celebrated songwriter

Carole King; stand on "Top of the World" with Benj Pasek and Justin Paul of Dear Evan Hansen and LaLa Land; and take a ride in the sky on the ship "Fantasy" with Earth, Wind & Fire. Learn more and buy tickets at RCCpittsburgh.com.

ELPC People

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

Good News

Join us in welcoming our new members and friends:

- **Kearsie Dougherty**, who joined by reaffirmation of faith.
- **Kelly Harris**, who joined by transfer.
- **Nick Harris**, who joined as a friend.

Prayers

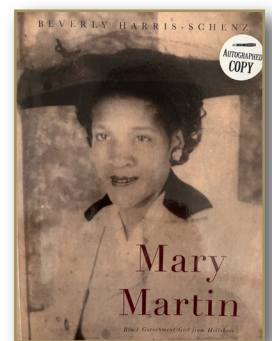
We offer our prayers of comfort to the family and friends of those who recently passed away.

- Sonya-Marie Morley
- Andrea DeVries' father
- Roberta London's father
- Doris Dick's uncle, Richard Martin
- Dana and David Carl's father, Alfred B. Carl
- Dr. Linda Lane's sister, the Rev. Gail Bowman
- Ian Faight's grandmother

Thanking God for Mary Martin

Beverly Harris-Schenz thanks God for *Mary Martin: Black Government Girl from Hillsboro*. Published to celebrate the centennial of her mother's birth, this book describes the life of an African

American girl who aspired to live a better life than could be realized in her hometown. In 1942, Mary traveled to Washington, D.C., worked as a clerk-typist—and despite Jim Crow and racial segregation—she achieved her goals.



“...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.”

A Gathering for Anyone Seeking a More Loving Community



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, at ELPC and on Zoom. Sign-in starts at 8:30 am.

Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott will be our guide. She is the author of *Necessary Risks: Challenges Privileged People Need to Face*.

This book 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 in ELPC. You do not have to be Presbyterian or a woman to participate! Bring your friends.

Register at tiny.cc/necessary-risks or after Sanctuary worship on **Sun., March 3**, where you may purchase a copy of Teri’s book. Registration must be received by **Wed., March 6**, 12 pm, so we can reserve lunch for you or send the Zoom link.

For more information—or to ask for or return a registration form—email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

Mendelssohn Choir Returns

Critically acclaimed as one of the finest choruses in the country, The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh returns to ELPC on **Sun., March 10**, 3 pm, for their first post-Covid *Cathedral Concert, Coming Home*, along with their new music director, Daniel Singer.

Home. It’s a state of mind, a physical place, a yearning inside each of us to find a place we can call home. This musical journey will explore this shared human condition—from our physical home on earth to a spiritual home beyond the stars and everywhere in between.

The concert is free. Contact Dr. Ed at EdM@coh.net for more details.

