Caster Vigil

March 30, 2024 • 7:00 PM



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Image by Jennifer Norton www.jennortonartstudio.com

EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 S. 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)

EASTER VIGIL

Saturday, March 30, 2024 • 7:00 pm

TIME OF GATHERING

Service of Light

WELCOME

Please gather around the Paschal Candle.

CALL TO WORSHIP

LIGHTING THE NEW FIRE

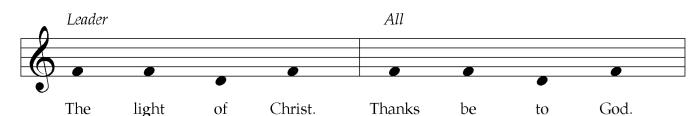
LIGHTING THE PASCHAL CANDLE

Those gathered are asked to light their individual candle from the Paschal Candle.

Each year at the Easter Vigil the Paschal Candle is lit. The design of the candle is rich in symbolism. The center of the candle is a gold cross with red Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The letters signify that Jesus Christ is the 'First and the Last,' the 'Beginning and the End.' (Revelation 22:13) The green laurel branches beneath the cross represent the victory of the resurrection. The current year represents that God is in the present amidst the congregation.

PRAYER

* **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** "The Light of Christ" The congregation sings the response and then proceeds to the entrance of the Chapel.



The congregation sings the response a second time at the entrance of the Columbarium.

The congregation proceeds to the pews in the Chapel.

The congregation sings the response for a third and final time while standing in the pews in the Chapel. Please raise your candles.

* Indicates where to please rise in body or spirit.

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

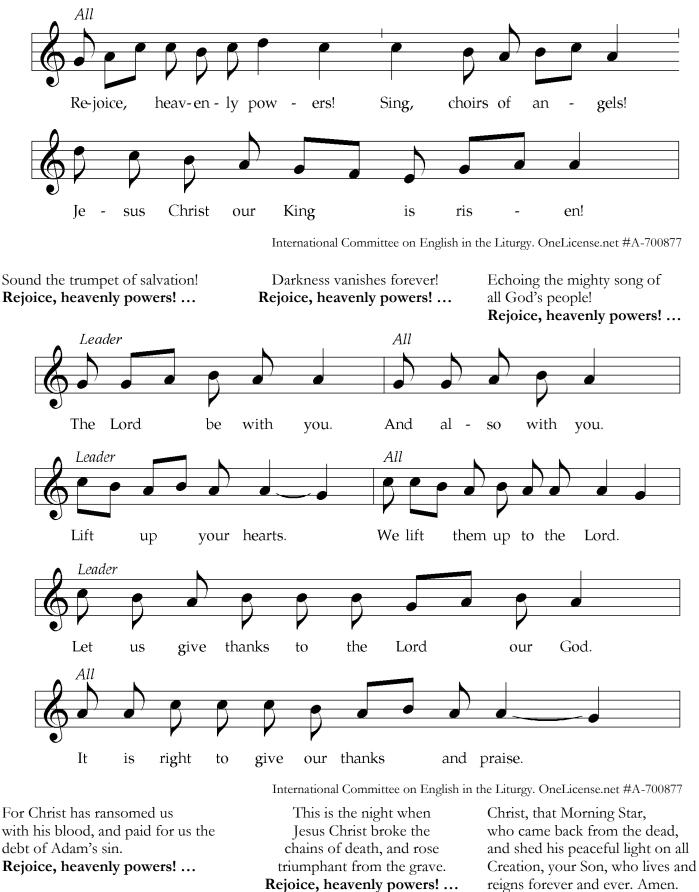
The Rev. Woodworth

The Rev. Woodworth

Dr. Edward Alan Moore

EASTER PROCLAMATION / THE EXSULTET

Please raise your candle as you sing.



Rejoice, heavenly powers! ...

The congregation may be seated and extinguish their candles.

Service of Readings

FIRST READING: STORY OF CREATION

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Todd Farwell

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness God called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together God called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in God's image, in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that had been done in creation.

SILENCE

Psalm 136



PRAYER (in unison)

Todd Farwell

Almighty and eternal God, you created all things in wonderful beauty and order. Help us now to perceive how still more wonderful is the new creation, by which, in the fullness of time, you redeemed your people through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

SECOND READING: SALVATION OFFERED FREELY TO ALL

Isaiah 55:1-11

Hear, everyone who thirsts; come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your earnings for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Now you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

SILENCE

CANTICLE

"First Canticle of Isaiah"

PRAYER (in unison)

Eternal God, by the power of your Word you created all things and by your Spirit you renew the earth. Give now the water of life to all who thirst for you and nourish with the spiritual food of bread and wine all who hunger for you, that our lives may bear the abundant fruit of your heavenly reign; through Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, who, with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever. Amen.

THIRD READING: THE WISDOM OF GOD

Proverbs 8:1-8; 19-21; 9:4b-6 Reed Williams Does not wisdom call and understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: "To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all who live. O simple ones, learn prudence; acquire intelligence, you who lack it. Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, endowing with wealth those who love me and filling their treasuries.

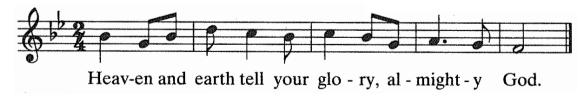
To those without sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity and live, and walk in the way of insight."

Psalm 19:1-6

SILENCE

Responsorial Psalm

Cantors sing verses; congregation sings refrain.



Doris Dick

Doris Dick

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

SILENCE

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Cantors sing verses; congregation sings refrain.

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PRAYER (in unison)

Sharon Geibel God of holiness and light, in the mystery of dying and rising with Christ you have established a new covenant of reconciliation. Cleanse our hearts and give a new spirit to all your people, that your saving grace may be professed and proclaimed to the whole world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FIFTH READING: THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Zephaniah 3:14-20 Carol Mullen Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

"Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will renew you

in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival."

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

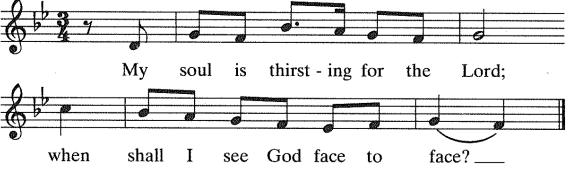
At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

SILENCE

Fountain of wisdom, by your word you set the universe in space, and with your hands you molded us in your image. Everywhere we see signs of your loving care. Guide us always into your ways, that in your wisdom we may find life abundant, and live forever in the splendor of your glory; through Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.

FOURTH READING: A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT

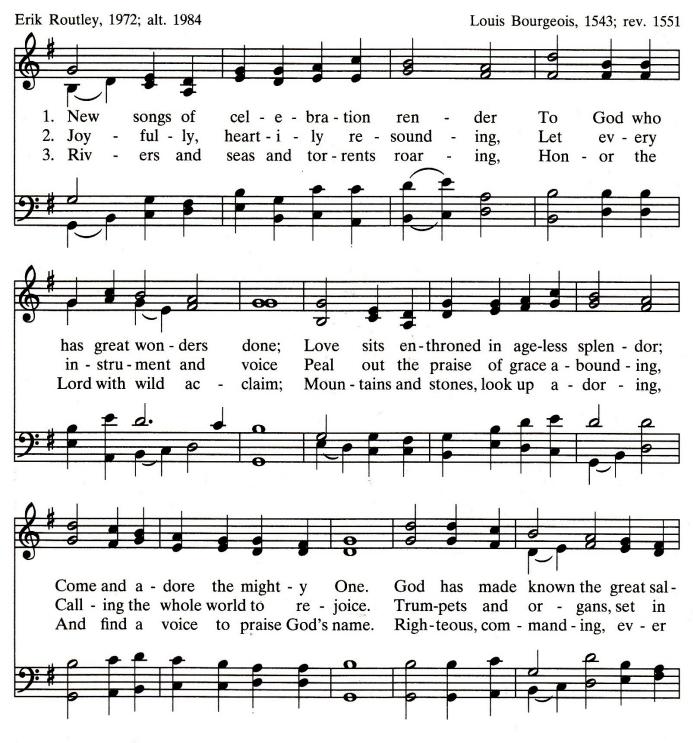
Ezekiel 36:24-28



Psalm 42

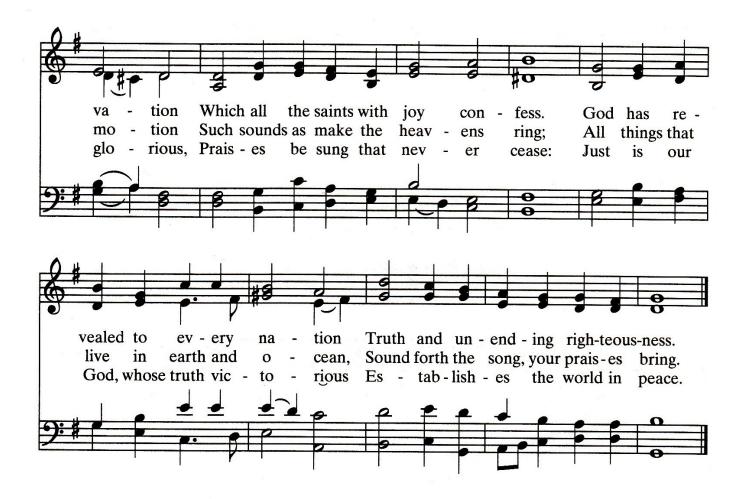
PRAYER (in unison)

Sharon Geibel



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PRAYER (in unison)

Carol Mullen

Eternal God of unchanging power and light, look with mercy on your whole church. Bring to completion your saving work, so that the whole world may see the fallen lifted up, the old made new, and all things brought to perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Please move through the narthex, picking up a bell from the table (without ringing it) and gather in the Sanctuary at the cross-aisle.

SIXTH READING

Mark 16:1-8

The Rev. Woodworth

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Romans 6:3-11 The Rev. Woodworth Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord. **People:** Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

Leader:	Christ is risen!
Leader.	Chilist is fiscal.
People:	Christ is risen!
Leader:	Christ is risen!
People:	Christ is risen!
Leader:	Christ is risen!
People:	Christ is risen, indeed!
All:	Alleluia, alleluia!

The congregation moves to the pews in the Sanctuary, ringing the bells throughout the hymn.

* **HYMN** (printed on next page)

"Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!"

HYMN TO JOY

Service of Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant

OPENING WORDS OF SCRIPTURE

The Rev. Woodworth

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

PROFESSION OF FAITH ("In Life and In Death" from <u>Stages on the Way</u> by Iona Community) The Rev. Woodworth

- Leader: In life, in death, in life beyond death,
- People: Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Leader: Over powers and principalities, over all who determine, control, govern or finance the affairs of humankind,
- People: Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Leader: Of the poor, of the broken, of the sinned against and of the sinner,
- People: Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Leader: Above the Church, beyond our most excellent theologies, and in the quiet corners of our hearts,
- People: Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Leader: Thanks be to God!
- People: Amen.

AFFIRMATION

- Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father and Mother of us all?
- People: I believe in God, the Father and Mother of us all, creator of heaven and earth.
- Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

The Rev. Woodworth

CHRIST IS RISEN! SHOUT HOSANNA!



In commenting on this late 20th-century text, the author has stressed his intention to affirm the social implications of an Easter faith: "Christian peace and justice action finds its wellspring, not in moral zeal or guilty conscience, but in the resurrection."

People: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Leader: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: We give you thanks, Eternal God, for you nourish and sustain all living things by the gift of water. In the beginning of time, your Spirit moved over the watery chaos, calling forth order and life. In the time of Noah, you destroyed evil by the waters of the flood, giving righteousness a new beginning. You led Israel out of slavery, through the waters of the sea, into the freedom of the promised land.

In the waters of Jordan, Jesus was baptized by John and anointed with your Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection, Christ set us free from sin and death, and opened the way to eternal life.

People: We thank you, O God, for the water of baptism. In it we were buried with Christ in his death. From it we were raised to share in his resurrection. Through it we were reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in joyful obedience to your Son, we celebrate our fellowship in him in faith. We pray that all who have passed through the water of baptism may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE WATER OF RENEWAL

- Leader: Remember your baptism and be thankful. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- People: Amen.

Service of the Easter Eucharist

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Communion is by intinction. Please come forward down the center aisle, receive a piece of bread and dip it in the cup, returning to your seat by the side aisles.

The congregation may dip their hands in the baptismal font, remembering their baptism, as they come forward to receive communion.

The Rev. Woodworth

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (in unison)

Gracious God, we have recalled your mighty acts in history. We have seen your power in sending light to conquer darkness, water to give us life, and the bread of heaven to nourish us in love. Send us with your salvation and joy to all the world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* Hymn

"Christ Is Alive!"

Truro



* CHARGE & BLESSING

The Rev. Woodworth

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

* BENEDICTION RESPONSE (chorus only; printed on next page) "To God Be The Glory"

Please return bells to the table in the Narthex.

B

TO GOD BE THE GLORY



Participants

The Rev. BJ Woodworth Doris Dick, Todd Farwell, Sharon Geibel, Liturgists: Carol Mullen, Reed Williams Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore, Organist/Music Director Todd Farwell, Tess Morris, Robin Thompson, Logan Williams, Cantors Beadles: Ian Kuchera, Mario Seneca Tim Benedict, Wayne Gaines

Notes on the Service ...

Our Book of Common Worship calls The Great Easter Vigil, "the brightest jewel of Christian liturgy." It is one of the oldest liturgical observances of the church, pre-dating Roman Catholicism, with roots in the New Testament church. Century by century, the liturgy was refined and symbols were added. By the fourth century, all of the elements were present: Light; Word; Baptism; and Eucharist. In the Vigil, we move from Maundy Thursday's darkness to Easter's light, through covenant and baptism to the anticipatory banquet of the Kingdom.

The Vigil is divided into four services or sections. Beginning with the Service of Light at the threshold of the church, the worship proceeds to a Service of the Word in the chapel, moving then to a Service of Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows as the worship moves to the sanctuary. The worship concludes with the Easter Proclamation, the Restoration of the Church and a Service of the Eucharist at the Communion table.

We invite you to celebrate Easter with us tomorrow at any of our worship services.

8:45 am • Journey Worship

Communion will be celebrated at this service in the Social Hall (basement level). The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy preaching.

9:30 am • Fellowship

Please join us in the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms from 9:30 to 10:45 am for a special time of fellowship and hospitality.

11:00 am • Sanctuary Worship

This is our largest service, with music from the Chancel Choir and guest instrumentalists. Special music begins at 10:45 am. The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy preaching and leading communion.





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Service Leader:

Sound Technicians:

East Liberty Presbyterian Church Extending radical hospitality to all!

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