

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)



EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

APRIL 21, 2024 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP



TIME OF PREPARATION

Social justice and environmental injustice are fueled by the same flame: the undervaluing, commodification, and exploitation of all forms of life and natural resources, from the smallest blade of grass to those living in poverty and oppressed people worldwide.... The earth shouldn’t be taken for granted, nor should its people. The drivers of this exploitation – greed, racism, capitalism, and other systems of oppression- should be rejected and dismantled.

— Leah Thomas, author of *“The Intersectional Environmentalist – How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People and The Planet”*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Creator and ruler of the universe, you entrusted your world to us as a gift. Help us to care for it and all people. That we may live in right relationship – with you, with ourselves, with one another, and with creation.

Christ our Lord, help us to recognize that we are all connected – to our brothers and sisters around the world, to those in poverty impacted by environmental devastation, and to future generations. Incite to action the hearts of all. Amen.

MUSIC MINISTRY

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”
“For the Beauty of the Earth”

Keith Kolander
Wayne Wold
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.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Like Job in the whirlwind or Jonah in the storm at sea, we come before you in awe of your power, God.

People: **We recognize that today’s storms and whirlwinds are not your judgment on your people but the distortion of natural and institutional systems of oppression, waste, and disregard perpetuated by our own sin and hubris.**

Leader: As the storms and whirlwinds of the climate crisis and environmental injustice accelerate around us, may our sanctuary be a place of refuge and resilience, where all of God’s creation might be protected and sustained, from which we, the people of God, might be sent forth to bring healing and justice.

People: May we ponder these things as we worship you today, O God.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #14

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

DIX

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

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CALL TO CONFESSION Isaac Smith

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION Isaac Smith

Good and gracious creator God, we pray that today we will embody your good news for all creation. Today, we seek to be builders and not desecrators as we commit to better ways of being humans, neighbors, and citizens of this earth. We open our hearts to be taught as your spirit moves, and we join you, O God, in working for a world that is more loving, liberating, and safe for all. Amen.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS Isaac Smith

Leader: Followers of Jesus, our Creator God has promised to forgive our sins and to restore the glory of God's good world. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

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

SUNG RESPONSE HYMN #48 (sing 3x) "Rain Down" RAIN DOWN

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON (Inclusive Bible translation) OT page 696
Psalm 46 Frances Irvin

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN Sara Hackett

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

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Presentation of Azizzi Davis

Profession of Faith

Act of Baptizing

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Members: Azizzi Davis, Kearsie Dougherty, Alexandra Schmulevich and Valentino Romlevich
Joseph Tyson, Andrew Wilkinson

* HYMN #36 "For the Fruit of All Creation" AR HYD Y NOS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON Nehemiah 2:11-20 OT page 589
The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

SERMON "A State of (Dis)Grace" The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

RESPONSIVE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER Nancy Heastings
Frances Irvin, Isaac Smith

Leader: Scripture tells us that "creation waits with eager longing for the children of God to be revealed."

People: Creation is waiting for us.

Leader: To open our eyes to the devastation in our world.

People: Creation is waiting for us.

Leader: To put the needs of the most vulnerable above the greed of the powerful.

People: Creation is waiting for us.

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

Leader: To move from doing what is easy to doing what is necessary and right.
People: Creation is waiting for us.
Leader: To prioritize the needs of the community over the convenience of self.
People: Creation is waiting for us.
Leader: To remove the pollution from our seas, land, air, bodies, and hearts.
People: Creation is waiting for us.
Leader: In all these things and more, creation waits for us to assume our roles as its servants and protectors.
People: **With God's help, we will answer creation's call.**
Leader: Creator God, receive our prayers as we join our voices together to pray as Jesus taught us, saying:
People: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Russ Walker

OFFERING INVITATION

Russ Walker

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

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



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

Mark Schweizer

Text by Folllott Sandford Pierpoint

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from our birth, over and around us lies. Christ, our Lord, to you we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise. For the wonder of each hour, of the day and of the night, hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light. Christ, our Lord, to you we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child, friends on earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild. Christ, our Lord, to you we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise. For your Church that evermore, lifts holy hands above, offering up on every shore, her pure sacrifice of love. Christ, our Lord, to you we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Christ, all creatures here below.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore. Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

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.
Leader: Gracious, creator God, we give you thanks, as you have shown us the meaning of love through Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us. Show us how to share Christ's love by giving our lives for others. May these gifts we bring today be used to restore all your creation and to glorify you. Amen!

* RECESSIONAL HYMN (see insert)

“The Climate is Changing”

ST. DENIO

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

POSTLUDE

“Fanfare”

William Mathias

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

Please silence all electronic devices before the service begins.

◆ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
Liturgists: Sara Hackett
Nancy Heastings
Frances Irvin
Isaac Smith
Russ Walker
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore
Organist/Music Director
ELPC Chancel Choir
Beadle: Linda Davis
Crucifer: Mario Seneca
Sound: Tim Benedict
Wayne Gaines

◆ SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP

Coffee and water are available in the Balaka Room.

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

If you would like to sponsor flowers for our weekly worship service in honor or memory of a loved one, please contact Norma (412.441.3800 x211). The cost is \$250 a Sunday. *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.
April 28 — The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy preaching.

11 am.....Sanctuary Worship. Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.
April 28 — The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy 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

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 Gloria Knopp for more info on future classes (GloriaK@coh.net).

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

TODAY AT ELPC

Earth Day Celebration

This morning we celebrate *Earth Day* at our worship services. May we remember to be good stewards of God's wondrous creation!



Gun Violence Prevention Letter Writing Event

Please join the Peace Committee after today's 11 am service for a *Social Hour* and to write letters to Pennsylvania legislators regarding gun violence prevention legislation.

The PA House of Representatives passed two bills — HB 714: *Universal Background Checks* and HB 1018: *Extreme Risk Protection Order* — which have been proven to save lives. Even though they have bi-partisan support, the chair is unwilling to bring them to the full Senate for a vote.

Sample letters will be available for you to send to Judiciary Chair Senator Lisa Baker and Majority Leader Senator Joe Pittman and your State Senator requesting hearings on these bills. Without hearings in the next few months these bills will “die” and the process to get gun legislation will have to begin again in January 2025. Bills must be voted on in the two-year legislative session.

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 Dana Carl.

The *Sanctuary* service DOD is Karen Beasley. She is seated in the East Transept (Highland Ave entrance).



No Worship Services on Marathon Sunday — May 5

Because the route of the Pittsburgh Marathon closes many streets surrounding ELPC, we will not hold any worship services that Sunday. The building will be closed.

ELPC Ringers in Handbell Festival — April 27

The ELPC Ringers will be participating in the *North Hills Handbell Festival* on Saturday, April 27. After a day of rehearsals and ringing with over 100 handbell ringers, there will be a public concert at 5:30 pm at St. Paul's United Methodist Church (1965 Ferguson Road, Allison Park 15101). The public is invited to the concert and donations will be accepted at the door.

Connections Ministry Potluck — April 28

The Connections Ministry invites everyone to a potluck lunch on Sunday, April 28 at 12:15 pm in the Good Samaritan Room. RSVP to connectelpc@gmail.com, and let us know what you're bringing to share at tiny.cc/connections-potluck.

Find Out How the Wildflowers Grow — May 4

Each spring a group of dedicated members and friends refresh the Highland Ave entrance, the courtyard and the rain garden. Join us on Saturday, May 4 from 9 am-1 pm to tidy up the church landscaping. Email Don Breitbarth (donbreitbarth@gmail.com) to help.

PW Bible Study: Sacred Encounters — May 6 and 7

Please join Presbyterian Women for their Bible Study on Monday, May 6 from 7-8:30 pm (Zoom only), or on Tuesday, May 7 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.

Environmental Book Study — May 9

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee invites you to read *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People + Planet* by Leah Thomas, and then join a book discussion on Thursday, May 9 at 7 pm on Zoom. Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) for info and link.

A Brass and Organ Spectacular

Friday, May 24 at 7:30 pm

The 13th season of ELPC's *Cathedral Concerts* series wraps up with a special concert featuring The Brass Roots, organist Dr. Edward Alan Moore, and conductor Daniel Nesta Curtis.



The concert will feature the premiere of a new piece for brass ensemble and organ by Pittsburgh composer Nancy Galbraith in honor of the 10-year anniversary of Dr. Ed Moore and The Brass Roots at ELPC called *East Liberty Overture*.

The concert is free, but a free will offering will be received. Contact Dr. Moore for more info (EdM@coh.net).





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

David Jennings Smith, Pen Lytle,
Gloria Ritchey's granddaughter Rhya,
and Vivienne Selia's friends Martha and Bob.

Condolences to Peta Harrigan Cole on her cousin's passing.

Condolences to Dr. Edward Alan Moore on his father's passing.

Committee Meetings This Week

Justice.....Wednesday, April 24 @ 5:30 pm
Neighbors.....Wednesday, April 24 @ 6:00 pm
PNC.....Saturday, April 27 @ 9:00 am

For more info about how to join a meeting, please contact
Gloria Knopp (GloriaK@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x222).

Pride Informational Fellowship Time – May 12

Stop by the Fellowship Room after the 11 am service on Sunday, May 12 to get a snack and all the info you need to know to participate in *Pittsburgh Pride* with others from ELPC this summer.

Donation Requests for The Chapel Market

The Chapel Market is in need of full-sized toiletry items (men's and women's deodorant, toothpaste, body wash, shampoo, razors, toilet paper, lotion, etc.) in addition to spring and summer clothing for men, woman and children. Donations can be left at the Highland Lobby, or dropped off at the Chapel Market when open (first and third Tuesday of each month from 5–7 pm, or Thursdays from 10 am–12 pm).



Attending to Wilderness:
A DAY RETREAT

Join us for a contemplative retreat on:
Saturday, June 1 from 9 am–4 pm
at Jennings Environmental Center
(2951 Prospect Rd, Slippery Rock, PA 16057)

There will be time in groups and in solitude, time for creative expression, prayer, and integrating what we discover within ourselves and our natural environment. Hiking options will be available for all skill levels. We will be led by Megan Shelly, a spiritual director and the founder of bewilderpgh (bewilderpgh.com), where she designs and leads retreats and contemplative backpacking trips.

The cost is \$40. Beverages, snacks, and lunch are provided. RSVP to Norma by May 19 (412.441.3800 x211).

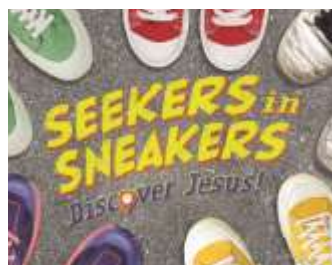
In our

COMMUNITY



End Gun Violence: PA Advocacy Day – May 7

Join hundreds of concerned citizens in Harrisburg on May 7 for *PA Advocacy Day* to pass legislation to end gun violence. Arrangements will be made for you to meet with your legislators and then join the rally on the front steps of the Capitol. You will hear from survivors, medical personnel, students, school administrators and others. CeasefirePA has built a coalition focused on a multi-pronged strategy to cut all forms of gun violence. For more info and to sign up, please visit bit.ly/4cCIQII.



VACATION
CHURCH
SCHOOL

June 24 to 28

Vacation Church School at ELPC will be held June

24–28 from 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.

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

April 28 ♦ 9:45 to 10:45 am

♦ ADULTS ♦

Journey with Scripture (Fellowship Rm) – Exploring the scripture passages represented in our Sanctuary's stained glass windows, facilitated by The Rev. Henk Bossers

Seekers (Garth Overlook Rm) – “Sacred Nature” video by Karen Armstrong, facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food (Good Samaritan Rm) – A discussion of chapters 27 and 28 of the book *Between the Dark and the Daylight* by Joan Chittester, led by The Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members