

Animating Anti-Racist Ways of Being



Join us on Zoom, **Wed.–Thurs., April 10–11**, 9 am–1 pm, to begin exploring how systemic racism—regardless of intent—provides advantages to white people and harms people of color. This workshop will build a shared understanding of how inherited systemic racism operates within institutions, including Pittsburgh Presbytery. Participants will work towards

identifying the impact of systemic racism and begin to provide tools for imagining solutions.

Register online at tiny.cc/end-racism. For further information or questions, contact arttpittsburgh@gmail.com.

Sponsored by the Anti-Racism Transformation Team of Pittsburgh Presbytery

The Life Recovery Bible Collection Drive

Where in scripture does Jesus compare himself to a prisoner who received a visit? You can find the answer in Matthew 25:36, “I was in prison and you visited me.”

If you’re “playing” this round of Bible Jeopardy, you probably have a Bible nearby where you can look up the answer. This is not the case in the Allegheny County Jail, where Life Recovery Bibles (New Living Translation) are the most requested and in the shortest supply.

The Matthew 25 Steering Committee of Pittsburgh Presbytery is asking each church in the presbytery to bring at least one paperback Life Recovery Bible to the May 23 presbytery meeting at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for donation to the jail. Due to storage constraints in the County Jail Chaplain’s office, we are requesting donations of \$17, the purchase price of the Bible. The Bibles and donations will be dedicated at the meeting.

The Bibles will support the Foundation of HOPE, an existing jail ministry which provides chaplaincy, pre-release and after care, as well as youth diversion programs. You may leave your donation of \$17 (checks made to the ACJ Chaplains Office), and Pastor Patrice will take them to the presbytery meeting.

To learn more about the Foundation of HOPE, contact Rev. Charissa Howe at Charissa.Howe@alleghenycounty.us or 412.350.2302.

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord’s Supper*

Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Theme: Growing in God’s Promises

April 7 Rev. BJ Woodworth

April 14 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 21 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 28 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

April 7 Rev. BJ Woodworth

April 14 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 21 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

April 28 Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. BJ Woodworth

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 ELPC.church for more details and to register.



East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

Staff Leadership

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**East Liberty
Presbyterian Church**

www.ELPC.church



Pastoral Message

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

On January 1, 2022, Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman released a poem on social media “to celebrate the new year and to honor the hurt and the humanity of the last one.” What follows are a few excerpts from the poem that Gorman spoke,

*May this be the day
We come together.
Mourning, we come to mend,
Withered, we come to weather,
Torn, we come to tend,
Battered, we come to better.
Tethered by this year of yearning,
We are learning
That though we weren't ready for this,
We have been readied by it.
We steadily vow that no matter
How we are weighed down,
We must always pave a way forward.*

*This hope is our door, our portal.
Even if we never get back to normal,
Someday we can venture beyond it,
To leave the known and take
the first steps.
So, let us not return to
what was normal,
But reach toward what is next.*

*

*

Amanda Gorman's poem reminds me of the familiar scripture passage from Ecclesiastes's third chapter: “For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven...” Meteorologically, winter has given way to spring, although it does not feel like it today (the first day of spring). Lent will soon give way to Holy Week and Resurrection Sunday, and only God knows what lies ahead in the coming months. However, we know nothing remains the same, especially if growth is to happen. A person, a life, or even a church that never changes is stagnant, immobile, not open to, and does not make or allow room for what God is doing.

One of the things that I learned and loved about ELPC when I walked through the doors almost 28 years ago is that Presbyterians are reformed and always reforming. We are not a stagnant denomination that seeks to remain the same. We strive to prayerfully discern what God is doing in our community, the world, and our church, and then we aim to join in and work to manifest God's will. Even when we do not understand what God is doing or how long God is taking, standing still and doing nothing is not viable and is not faithful.

The writer of Ecclesiastes clearly states that change is inevitable. “God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, God has put a sense of past and future into their minds...” (Ecclesiastes 3:11a). Looking back to reminisce about the good ole days without a sense of the future or romanticizing either—the past or future—may cause us to miss what God is doing in the present. And God is doing some amazingly wonderful things right now!

Continued on page 3

Pastoral Message Continued

We are receiving new members and friends who are eager to join in our church's work; Pastor Heather and Miss Sara report that the youth in our Confirmation Class are intelligent, curious, already engaged in our church's life, and anticipating serving in new ways. Many of you are volunteering in new ways at our church—helping with room setups, reimagining our worship environment, returning to the use of dishes and silverware to eliminate waste, and—as others continue to serve faithfully—cleaning and weeding the rain garden, assisting shoppers in The Chapel Market, and teaching church school classes, to name a few ways. We were even blessed by United Steel Workers Union members, who recently volunteered to paint The Chapel Market and weed and mulch the rain garden, saving the church an estimated \$5,000. Each of these exemplifies God's faithfulness and our collective hope to continue to be the Cathedral of Hope in every season.

What new ways do you see God at work in our congregation, our community, and our lives? Are you willing to step up now and “be” the church, as we anticipate what is to come? In the words of Amanda Gorman,

*Even if we never get back to normal,
Someday we can venture beyond it,
To leave the known and take the first steps.
So let us not return to what was normal,
But reach toward what is next.*

Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Mission Matters

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

Clean Energy Standard Proposal Letter Writing Event

Pennsylvania is one of the five worst states when it comes to the amount of clean, renewable energy that's used to power our homes and businesses. Governor Shapiro has released a slate of major energy policies that would increase that to 35% by 2035. It will plug abandoned gas wells, and includes investments in underutilized technologies like hydropower and geothermal.

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee invites you to send a thank you letter to Governor Shapiro. Join us for a letter writing event in the Fellowship Room on **Sun., April 14**, after our Journey and Sanctuary services. A sample letter and a fact sheet will be available.

Environmental Book Study: The Intersectional Environmentalist

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 **Thurs., May 9**, 7 pm, on Zoom.

The book examines the inextricable link between environmentalism, racism, and privilege, and promotes awareness of the fundamental truth that we cannot save the planet without uplifting the voices of its people.

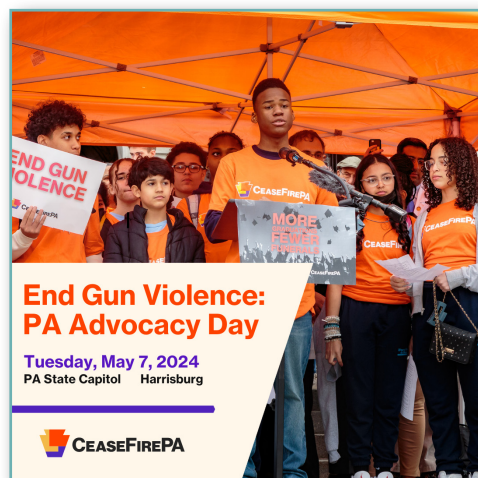
For more details, contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net.

End Gun Violence: Pa. Advocacy Day

On average, someone is killed with a gun every 5 hours in Pennsylvania.

Your voice needs to be heard by our lawmakers; advocacy is effective! After last year's March for Our Lives, PA Advocacy Day—during which 500 Pennsylvanians were in Harrisburg talking with legislators and rallying at the Capitol—the most significant gun safety policies in years passed the House with bi-partisan support.

Unfortunately, that legislation has not been passed by the Senate, and so, it has not reached the governor's desk. In addition, there are more policies, such as reining in ghost guns, keeping children safe, and stopping straw purchases—which all need final votes in the State House.



Join hundreds of concerned citizens in Harrisburg on **Tues., May 7!** 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 information and to sign up bit.ly/4cCIQII.

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

Join us as we 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

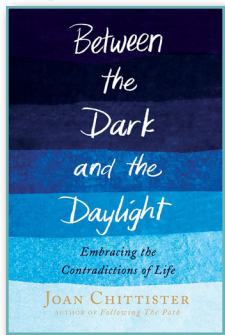
Facilitator: Trish Buben and other class members

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

April 7-28: Between the Dark and the Daylight



This month, we will discuss chapters 21-28 of our current book, *Between the Dark and the Daylight: Embracing the Contradictions of Life*, by Joan Chittister.

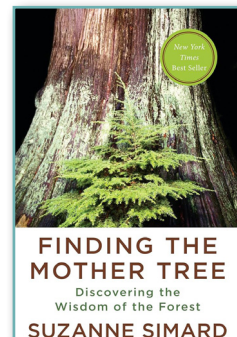
New participants are always welcome! For more information, contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu at hajdu625@comcast.net.

Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza, gpuza9@gmail.com

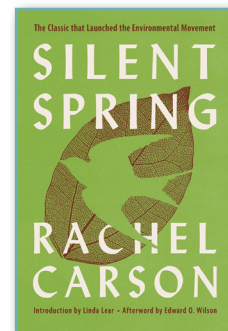
April 7: Finding the Mother Tree: A Conversation with Suzanne Simard

Ecologist Suzanne Simard has spent a lifetime documenting the forests of North America and the Arctic. Rather than simple collections of individual plants, these forests are complex communities of interdependent species that share resources and rely on one another for survival. Simard shares fascinating insights into how trees have evolved to perceive one another, recognize their neighbors, and remember the past; how they elicit warnings and mount defenses; and how they compete and cooperate with one another. She talks about how these trees were valued and cared for by the First Nations, and how that knowledge is being lost by today's corporate logging.



April 14: Rachel Carson: Voice of Nature

This PBS video focuses on Rachel Carson's connection to Pennsylvania and the impact her work had on the state's environmental and conservation policy. Inspired by a supportive mother, her natural surroundings, and the Allegheny River, it was her formative years in Springdale that shaped her passionate environmental ethic. Her book *Silent Spring* (1962) brought environmental concerns to an unprecedented share of the American people, which led to a nationwide ban on DDT and other pesticides.



April 21: Illegal Mining and Deforestation are Destroying the Amazon.

In this video, investigative reporter Mariana van Zeller travels to the Amazon to bring attention to the destruction of the Amazon from illegal mining and deforestation, led by criminals. The criminals profit from their illegal mining by selling gold for use in jewelry and technology (smart phones and computers).

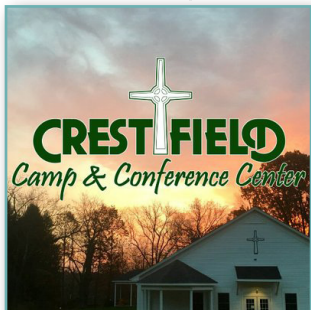
April 28: Karen Armstrong: Sacred Nature

Karen Armstrong is known for her books and lectures about comparative religions. In this video, she talks about her book *Sacred Nature*, which looks at our views about nature over years and cultures. She says that "Everything in nature has its own life. We must honor that."

Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Mon.–Fri., July 22–26: Middle School Service Week at Crestfield



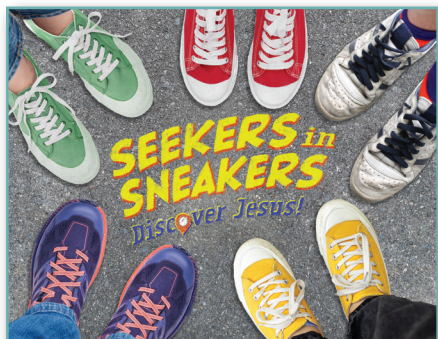
Youth in grades 6–8 are invited to Crestfield Camp and Conference Center for Service Adventure Camp, combining Crestfield Adventure with local missions and service opportunities. During the day, campers will be sent out to local non-profits to learn about and assist those agencies. Back at camp in the late afternoon, campers can chill at the pool or take a much needed FOB (flat on bunk). After dinner, there will be canoeing, ninja walling, archery, Big Friz, and more! Youth from multiple churches around Pittsburgh will be working and playing together this week. The cost is \$400; scholarships are available.

Sun.–Fri., August 4–9: Mission Trip & Pilgrimage to Washington, D.C.

Students who have finished grade 7–12 are going to Washington, D.C., to stay at the Friends Place, a Quaker guest house and learning center just blocks from our Nation's Capitol. Friends Place offers opportunities for experiential education and civic engagement programs with a focus on how people-power creates justice, peace, a healthy planet, and a stronger democracy. We also will be visiting museums and monuments, the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, and serving alongside agencies working for food justice in D.C. The cost for the week is \$450 dollars and scholarships are available.

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. Spots are filling up fast, so don't delay, register today!



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.

Confirmation Class

Our Confirmation Class will meet in the Second Floor Parlor after Sanctuary worship on **Sun., April 14**, to start writing our *Statements of Faith* with our sponsors.

Trinity Youth Conference

Trinity Youth Conference (TYC) is happening **Sun.–Sat., July 14–20**, this summer! TYC is a regional Presbyterian leadership conference for youth who have completed grade 9 through college-age students in Shellsburg, Pennsylvania. The week consists of meaningful workshops, camp games, relevant worship, and refreshingly honest small groups. TYC is planned and led by a youth planning team, including ELPC's own Rachel Ammon and Shayla Brigido this year. Rev. Erin Angeli, the associate pastor for Queer & Neighborhood Ministry at The Commonwealth Church of Oakland, is this year's worship leader. Information about the cost, workshops, registration, and schedule can be found online at TrinityYouthConference.org. Talk to Sara Hackett for more information or scholarship opportunities.

Young Adult Ministry Walks Highland Park

Come along on **Sat., April 20**, as we walk and talk at Highland Park. We will be at Tazza D'oro in the Highland Park neighborhood from 9:30–10 am, and then walk through Highland Park starting at 10 am. This was a beloved Young Adult Ministry event a few years ago, and Earth Day weekend felt like the right time to bring it back!

Building and Grounds Beautification Work

You may have noticed that the garden areas around ELPC have been weeded and freshly mulched to prepare for spring. If you have been in The Chapel Market recently, you may have noticed that the area is brighter and more inviting because the walls have been painted. You probably didn't know that the United Steelworkers Union recently held a week-long convention in Pittsburgh (March 3–8) for their new and younger members who they refer to as "Next-Gen" members. What do these things have in common?

On March 7, these USW convention participants volunteered to donate their time to community service at 18 sites across Pittsburgh, including ELPC! Twelve volunteers, from across the country, came to ELPC to complete these projects for us. The USW supplied the materials and tools needed. We are very appreciative of their generosity and time.



We also are grateful for the 12+ ELPC congregation members and staff who made this USW workday such a success! Much was accomplished in just three hours due to coordination and preplanning efforts. And let's not forget that The Chapel Market needed to be "put back together" as a shopping area! Special thanks go out to Don Breitbarth for coordinating the garden work; to Emily Rosenthal, Cathleen Malmstrom and Gerald McClendon for coordinating The Chapel Market work; and to Jim Tinnemeyer and the facilities staff for their support and oversight.

This work saved our church an estimated \$5,000 in out-of-pocket costs!

Presbyterian Women

PW Bible Study: Lydia Encounters Jesus in Worship

Mon., April 1 7–8:30 pm (Zoom Only)

Tues., April 2 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)

Lydia, a wealthy merchant of luxury goods, encountered the *Good News* in a place of prayer, by the riverside on the Sabbath day (Acts 16:11–15). According to the scripture, "The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul." Like the Ethiopian Eunuch, Lydia's conversion was confirmed by baptism. Before his ascension, Jesus told his Disciples, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses...to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Through Lydia, Christianity expanded into Europe; just as the gospel spread to Africa through the Ethiopian Eunuch.

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.



Spiritual Life

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life, Taizé, and Transitional Ministries

Attending to Wilderness: A Day Retreat Exploring Our Inner & Outer Landscapes

When we spend time immersed in nature, noticing, and attending to both the detail and grandeur of our outer world, we simultaneously notice and attend to our inner world. Join us for a contemplative retreat on **Sat., June 1**, 9 am–4 pm, as we wander, reflect, explore, and share together 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—including a longer more challenging hike, a hike on short easy terrain, and a very mild, mostly stationary option.

We will be led by Megan Shelly, a spiritual director and the founder of *bewilderprgh*, where she designs and leads retreats and contemplative backpacking trips. You can learn more about her work at bewilderprgh.com.

The cost is \$40. Beverages, snacks, and lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Norma Meyer at **412.441.3800 x211** by **Sun., May 19**.



April PNC Updates

At ELPC's Annual Meeting on February 25, we were asked about the five top categories to emerge from the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) that 301 of you completed last year. Here they are:

1. We are looking for a person to LEAD CHANGE.
2. We hope to find a person who VALUES TRADITION.
3. We want an ADAPTABLE person.
4. We are looking for a SOCIALLY AWARE person.
5. We need an ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGER.

As well as keeping these five characteristics in mind, we are seeking a person with experience in a large urban church. We also are looking at ways the various candidates have dealt with conflict in their pastoral positions. We are interested in how they have supported the tenets of a Matthew 25 church: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. And we want to learn about their experience with LGBTQIA+ ministry.

By the time you read this, we will have reviewed the personal discernment profiles of 42 individuals and interviewed nine candidates on Zoom. One of us moderates the interview and one of us takes notes; interviews last a little over a half hour, and they have been such a help in getting to know who these folks are whose profiles we've read and whose sermon videos we've watched.

We hope to be starting second interviews fairly soon; months ago when we were preparing to begin the CAT and encouraging all of you to participate, the interview process seemed far away indeed.

There you have it! Please feel free to ask us questions, and we will answer you to the very best of our ability. And, above all, keep praying for your PNC, our potential candidates, and, all of us here at ELPC who care so deeply about the good work our church is doing. We believe we are all in God's good hands.

In peace,

—Polly McQueen

ELPC Pastor Nominating Committee: Doug Booth, Bill Buchanan, David Carl, Andrea DeVries, Jim Eng, Linda Lane (Chair), Rebecca McGregor (Secretary), Polly McQueen, Antwone Wright

LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry

Sun., April 14: Spiritual Gathering 12:30 pm

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? Please contact Wil Forrest at wil@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x218.

God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.

ELPC People

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

Good News

- Congratulations to **Delta Mae Snoek Griess**, daughter of Emily Snoek and Jason Griess, and who was baptized on March 24.
- Congratulations to **Jason Van Ness**, who received the President's Bronze Volunteer Service Award.

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.



“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.”

Stewardship Committee Seeks New Members

Calling all passionate individuals! Are you eager to make a meaningful impact within ELPC and the community? Join us in shaping a brighter future by becoming a part of our dynamic Stewardship Committee.

We are on a mission to support vital church initiatives, enhance our outreach programs, and strengthen our community bonds.

Whether you’re a seasoned fundraiser or just starting out, you’ll play a pivotal role in uplifting our congregation and extending our reach beyond the pews.

No experience necessary—just a heart for our mission! Interested? Contact Tiffany Sudar at tmsudar@gmail.com. Join us in making a difference!

What’s for Lunch?

The Connections Ministry invites everyone at ELPC to a potluck lunch on **Sun., April 28**, 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.

A Brass & Organ Spectacular

The 13th season of ELPC’s *Cathedral Concerts* series wraps up on **Fri., May 24**, 7:30, 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 The Brass Roots in residence at ELPC.

The concert is free. For more details, contact Dr. Ed at EdM@coh.net.

