

Celebrating Pastor Heather's Ministry



Please plan on joining us following Sanctuary worship on **Sunday, September 22**, for a farewell celebration in honor of the Rev. Heather Schoenewolf, our departing Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Educational Ministries, and her family. We'll gather in the Courtyard for food and to say "thank you!"

We are putting together a scrapbook for the Schoenewolfs. Please send photos and notes to Jason Van Ness at jasonlucarelli@gmail.com.

If you would like to help make decorations for the party, join us at ELPC to prepare on **Saturday, September 21**, 1–3pm. Please contact Trish Buben at tab190@gmail.com for details.

September Updates From Your PNC

Dear ELPC Members, Friends, and Staff:

At the time of this writing, August 8, we believe that with God's guidance, we are in the last steps of our search for a new Pastor. We have met in person with three exceptional individuals, and have completed the required reference checks. Background checks have been completed by Presbytery. Each of our finalists also had interviews with the Committee on Ministry. We have prayed, met, listened, and talked about each of our candidates, seeking to discern the best fit for our church at this time in our history.

As you know, the final remaining steps in the process include both a Candidating service and a Congregational vote for the candidate that God has led us to invite to our church family.

We are excited to announce that a candidate has been selected and the Session has called a Congregational meeting to vote on this candidate on **Sunday, October 6**. Mark your calendars for this date and please continue to keep us and our candidate in your prayers.

—Linda Lane

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

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

Summer Worship | 10 am

Sept. 1 Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Theme: New Beginnings

Sept. 8 Rev. BJ Woodworth

Sept. 15 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sept. 22* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sept. 29 Rev. Brian Wallace,
Pittsburgh Presbytery

Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

Sept. 8 Rev. BJ Woodworth

Sept. 15 Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sept. 22* Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

Sept. 29 Rev. Brian Wallace,
Pittsburgh Presbytery

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. BJ Woodworth

Welcome Back Breakfast for All

Celebrate the return of our fall church schedule with breakfast on **Rally Day, Sunday, September 8**, 9:45–10:45 am, in the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms. Please join us for this time of intergenerational fellowship.

Children and youth Sunday School classes resume on **Sunday, September 8**. Adult Sunday School classes begin on **Sunday, September 15**. See page 4 for more details.

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

Staff Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

*Acting Co-Pastor and
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The Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

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The Rev. BJ Woodworth

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Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Acting Co-Pastor and Pastor for Mission Ministries



I did not realize until my sabbatical how mentally, physically, and spiritually tired I was. Working full-time in ministry, serving God's people in the church and the community, and completing my doctorate degree had utterly depleted me. Being at the point of exhaustion caused me to internalize the notion that I was not enough and to suffer from "imposter syndrome."

I needed a break. I desperately needed to take time to breathe, center myself, reset, and seek God. I reminded myself that after pouring out to others, Jesus would often steal away to be replenished, pray, and reconnect to his source, God. So, during my sabbatical, I set my intentions to embark on a season of cultural immersion to remind myself who I am in God's sight through worship, rest, connecting, and reflection.

I attended the Hampton Ministers' Conference the first week of my sabbatical, a 125-year-old gathering of Black pastors and preachers from every denomination that is held at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia. While there, I was surrounded by the preached Word of God, praise and worship, and singing in the Black tradition in which I was raised and nurtured. The worship services were spirit-filled and emotive. That experience recharged my spiritual battery, as I reconnected to my source—the Lord God.

I spent time with my family and spent a week with my mother. Although she no longer knows who I am, my heart still leaps when I am in her presence. Spending time with my mother in the home where I was raised and nurtured, reminded me of and connected me to who I am—JoAnn and Bobby's daughter—and that I am loved unconditionally, just as I am, and that I do not need to be anything other than Patrice.

I do not know anything about the people from whom I descended, so I decided to go to the source—Charleston, South Carolina. I spent a week, immersing myself in the history of the enslaved people who arrived on those shores from Africa. I toured a plantation, and I took my shoes off and planted my feet in the soil where the ancestors walked and were robbed of their freedom, culture, identities, and dignity. I prayed and wept. Mother Nature wept with me as a soft rain began to fall, and the spirit of the ancestors and God reminded me that I am descended from kings and queens who had their birthrights and humanity stolen from them, and that I reflect their dignity, greatness, and perseverance into this world.

The final week of my sabbatical, I traveled to New York, and I saw *The Wiz* on Broadway. The musical was a party and a church service rolled into one. It was a study of good and evil, acceptance of who we are, and a lesson on loving ourselves and others, just as we/they are—imperfectly perfect—and an illustration in the realization that very often things and people are not what they seem. The artistry, creativity, pageantry, and talented actors of African descent sang, danced, and acted in beautiful costumes against imaginative and majestic backgrounds. The play fed my spirit and confirmed that I, too, am wonderfully and fearfully made, creative and talented, and imperfectly perfect.

Continued on page 3

Pastoral Message Continued

Even though I spent many hours in airports waiting and flying, driving from state to state, my sabbatical was a time of rest, refreshment, reflection, and confirmation. It was a time to remember that the pressure that we often place on ourselves to achieve more, to spend more hours on the job, to acquire more stuff, or to try to prove our worth, is unnecessary. God loves us just as we are; we are more than we imagine, and we all need time to just be still. I pray that each of you had time to reflect, refresh, and reset this summer—and took time to seek God's confirmation that you are or are becoming exactly who God created you to be. And more than anything, I hope you know that you are enough.

Patrice Fowler-Searcy

News from Session

In August, the Session of ELPC voted to call a congregational meeting on **Sunday, October 6**, following Sanctuary worship, to receive a report from the Pastor Nominating Committee and to act upon its recommendation to call a new senior pastor.

Congregational Meeting

At a special meeting held on July 28, Session approved a motion to call a congregational meeting following worship on **Sunday, September 15**, to act on Pastor Heather's request to dissolve her call as ELPC's Acting Co-Pastor and Associate Pastor for Educational Ministries, effective September 30. All members are encouraged to attend.

And plan on joining us on Sunday, September 22, to celebrate Pastor Heather's service to our worship community. Effective October 1, Pastor Heather will begin serving as the solo Pastor of the Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon.

Ready to Vote?

A Justice Committee ad hoc group is planning several events to get you ready to vote and prepare you to encourage others to vote. We know that this is a consequential election. Candidate forums also are being planned for September and October.

Join us on **Sundays, September 29, October 6, and October 13**. We will always be non-partisan in our activities. For questions, contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net.

Your voice. Your vote. Use it!
Our democracy needs *ALL* of us.

Mission Matters

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



OHM Workday Success!

Thank you to those who came over to the house in Garfield on August 3, to help rehab and get it ready for new, first-time homeowners to move in soon.

ELPC (through the Mission Board and Neighbors Committee) is one of four area churches that founded and continue to provide support to Open Hand Ministries (OHM) over the past 16 years. OHM assists families in the East End of Pittsburgh to become financially healthy and—in many cases—first-time homeowners.

Be on the lookout for our next OHM volunteer opportunity. If you know a family who might need help with financial wellness, please check out the website at OpenHandPgh.org or contact anyone on the Neighbors Committee.

Welcome Pilgrims from Malawi

Our friends from Malawi, including a visitor from our sister church in Balaka, will be arriving in Pittsburgh on **Thursday, October 3**. We're looking for hosts to welcome and house them, as well as provide transportation and other services. The first hosting period is **October 5–10**, and the second is **October 10–14**. Several Presbytery events have already been planned.

If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Kay Shissler at kshissler@juno.com.

Christian Education

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

Note: Adult classes meet on Sundays, 9:45am.

New Sunday Schedule for Children and Teens



Grades 7–12 @ 9:45 am

Youth in grades 7–12 will meet for breakfast on the first Sunday of the month (our first breakfast will be on September 8). Teens also will meet after church one Sunday a month for lunch and programming.

Preschool–Grade 3 @ 11:15 am

Children will go to *Sunday School: Sacred Stories for Kids*, after the Moments with our Children during Sanctuary worship. Parents will pick up their kids after worship in Room 206. Using the Godly Play curriculum, kids will hear, see, touch, and retell the sacred stories of our faith while asking, “I wonder ...” questions, and responding with art. Children also will pray, sing, and share a snack.



Grades 4–6 @ 11:15 am

Tweens will go to *Sunday School: Sacred Stories for Tweens* after the Moments with our Children during Sanctuary worship. Parents will pick up kids after worship in Room 207. Tweens will dig into Bible stories through games, conversations, crafts, drama, and teamwork to discover what these stories mean to them in today’s world.

Journey with Scripture | Highland Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Henk Bossers and other class members

The Journey with Scripture class reads scripture readings listed in the Revised Common Lectionary. Participants seek encouragement from God—towards the direction of steadfast love, justice, and faithfulness in their lives. Prior knowledge of the scriptures is not necessary. Contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net for details.

Join us this fall as we relate both the Psalms and the liturgical calendar’s Gospel of Mark with the “Heavenly Hosts.” Our scriptures will expand and deepen our understanding of our “Reformed, Ever Reforming” legacy.

Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza

The Seekers wish to grow in religious understanding, insight, faith, and practice. Classes create a space for spiritual and intellectual exploration, enrichment, and sharing. Together we seek a broad, inclusive dialogue, including respecting and learning about other faith traditions. All viewpoints are welcomed. Contact Gwen Puza at gpuza9@gmail.com for more information.

September 15: Bishop John Shelby Spong’s Last Public lecture

Bishop Spong served as a priest in the Episcopal Church for 21 years, and has become known as a spokesperson for an open, scholarly, and inclusive Christianity. A deeply committed Christian, he insists that he also must speak as an informed citizen of 21st century. In his last lecture before he retired, presented at Chautauqua Institute, he discussed his basic beliefs about Christianity today.

September 22: Solution to Solving the “Border Crisis”

A panel of experts discuss creative solutions to America’s immigration crisis, and how to end the past decade’s debacle at the Southern border. What can be done to respond to and alleviate the chaos and human suffering at the U.S.-Mexico border? The panelists suggest creating safe and legal pathways for asylum seekers.

September 29: Discussions on *Freeing Jesus* and What is Happening Politically in Our Country Today?

Diana Butler Bass is an American historian of Christianity and an advocate for progressive Christianity. She will discuss her book, *Freeing Jesus*. There are six free copies that you can borrow from Carnegie Library. Ask for it at your local branch, or you can buy a used copy on Amazon.

Dr. Bass also will discuss how our country is grappling with a profound hate, much in the name of Christianity—some people holding signs saying “Jesus Saves” at the Capitol on January 6. What is going on? A return to a barbaric God?

Soul Food | Good Samaritan Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

Soul Food focuses on feeding our spirits and nurturing our awareness of God’s presence. We use a prayerful, contemplative format that includes small group discussions of spiritually nourishing texts and personal experiences. For more information, contact the Rev. Joe Hajdu at hajdu625@comcast.net.

This fall, we will be discussing *Always a Guest* by Barbara Brown Taylor. New participants are always welcome!

Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Friday, September 27: Tween Dinner & Games 5:30–7:30 pm

Tween in grades 4–6 are invited to join us at ELPC for dinner and games—parachute games, gym games, card games, and a life size game of (somewhat edible) Candyland!

Save the Dates

- Thursday, October 10 | Youth Corn Maze (grades 7–12) @ 12:30 pm
- Sunday, October 13 | Family Bowling @ 12 pm
- Sunday, October 27 | Tween Pumpkin Carving (grades 4–6) @ 12:30 pm



club one sixteen

Kids in grades 1–6 are invited to **club one sixteen**, our midweek youth group ministry, on Wednesdays, 4:30–6:30 pm, beginning September 11. We have Bible study, crafts, games in the gym, and dinner together!

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

Youth Group

Our new Youth Group begins on **Thursday, September 12**. We gather on Thursdays, 4:30–7 pm. Together with Sixth Presbyterian church, we share dinner, pray, play, and explore faith—but now with more flexibility to do more service projects, “field trips,” and whatever else we dream up! **Register online.**



Young Adult Ministry

Jam with the YAMs!

Are you 18–40? Do you love bagels? Mark your calendars for Jam with the YAMs (Young Adult Ministry). We will gather on the third Sunday of each month, starting **Sunday, September 15**, in the Garth Overlook Room for bagels, coffee, and fellowship. Hope to see you there!

Contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net with any questions.

Connections Make a Big Church Feel Small

Our Connections dinner groups are re-forming this fall! Would you like to join about 10 people who gather monthly for a potluck meal or other activity to get to know one another?

Whether you are new to Connections or have participated before, complete the form at tinyurl.com/ELPCconnect by Sunday, October 6.

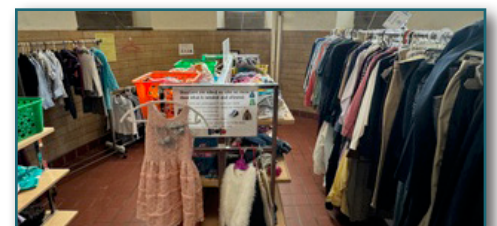


Chapel Market Updates

The Chapel Market is a free clothing shop housed in ELPC and operated by a dedicated group of volunteers. It is located in the small Chapel area (entrance on Whitfield Street) and it's open every Thursday, 10 am–12 pm, and on the first and third Tuesday of each month, 5–7 pm. Over 100 of our neighbors shop at The Chapel Market every month and we are grateful to be a reliable service to them.

We are constantly in need of donations of new or gently used children's, women's, and men's clothing (for the current season), including underwear, socks and shoes. Toiletries are always appreciated. Donations may be dropped off in the boxes at the Highland entrance any time the Church is open.

To volunteer, talk with anyone on the Neighbors Committee or email Gerald McClendon at geraldm@coh.net.



Contemplative Prayer

Our weekly Monday morning, online Contemplative Prayer group will restart on **Monday, September 9**, 7:30–8 am. We created this space almost four years ago amidst the pandemic, to help people connect with God, themselves, others, and the world through the practice of contemplative prayer with others. We begin each of our sessions with a little breathing and paying attention to our bodies to help us settle into our time. Then we read a piece of sacred text (often from the Bible), and then we simply sit together—in silence—with any words, phrases, and images that draw our attention. Two or three reflective questions may be asked, and the text may be read again, followed by a longer time of quietness. A closing prayer is offered, and we come back on screen, say goodbye, and log off.

Our group of 10–15 people repeatedly say this time is grounding, centering, refreshing, relaxing, formational, a great way to start your day/week, and builds community—though nothing interpersonal is said. It's value and effectiveness are often invisible.

Celebrating-the-Beauty-of-You Yoga Retreat

Join us on **Saturday, October 5**, 9 am–4 pm, to enjoy a fall day of community—offering a time for reflection, gentle yoga, meditation, catered lunch, movement, and a luxurious final sound bath.

Yamuna will lead most of the activities in the Sanctuary. Special guest Jessica Rosario will offer the sound bath with her crystal bowls and mesmerizing voice!

The cost is a suggested donation of \$60–\$90 (scholarships are available).

Presbyterian Women Bible Study

Let Justice Roll Down: Environmental Justice

Monday, September 9 7–8:30 pm (Zoom Only)

Tuesday, September 10 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)

Six centuries before Jesus' time, the prophet Ezekiel understood that care of creation and social justice are intertwined. We begin this year's Bible Study with Scripture's most direct image of ecological harm, Ezekiel 33:21; 34:8, 17–19.

Pastor Heather will lead our study this month, as we consider our call to protect the created world and to love our neighbors. We will examine contemporary environmental policies in light of our call. Reading the lesson in advance will help you prepare for a lively discussion.

Our Tuesday morning Bible Study will be followed by a potluck lunch in honor of Pastor Heather and her ministry among us. Bring a dish to share with the group; beverages will be provided.

For a copy of the Bible Study, more information, and the Zoom link, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.



Artwork: "All the Words"
by Lorraine Roy

The Sacrament of Letting Go Retreat

*"First she surrendered her Green
Then the Orange, Yellow, and Red...
Finally she let go of her Brown...
Shedding her last leaf
She stood empty and silent, stripped bare
Leaning against the sky she began her vigil of trust..."*

—Macrina Weiderkehr, *The Seasons of Your Heart*



Are you being invited into a vigil of trust? What is the green, orange, yellow, red and brown that you, individually, are being invited to shed? What is the green, orange, yellow, red and brown that we, collectively, need to shed?

Come "lean against the sky" during this contemplative retreat at the Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center in Pulaski, Pennsylvania, **Friday–Sunday, September 27–29**. Engage in a variety of forms of prayer through art, journaling, nature, and silent reflection. Make yourself available to a greater knowing, and discover the peace and divine wisdom that is already seeking you.

We will be led by Lynn Holden spiritual director, professional counselor, and founder of Cultivating Awareness. Learn more at LynnHolden.com.

RSVP to Norma Meyer at **412.441.3800 x211** by **Sunday, September 15**. The cost options are as follows:

- One Night: (Friday–Saturday or Saturday–Sunday) Shared Bath | \$70
- One Night: (Friday–Saturday or Saturday–Sunday) Private Bath | \$110
- Two Nights (Friday–Sunday) Shared Bath | \$85
- Two Nights (Friday–Sunday) Private Bath | \$135

Staff Transitions

With sadness and thanksgiving, we wish Godspeed to three cherished staff members who are leaving ELPC. You all will be greatly missed, and we thank God for your ministry to ELPC and your service to our community.

Pastor Heather Schoenewolf has accepted a call as solo pastor at Community Church of Ben Avon, effective October 1.

Linda Addlespurger, director of Hope Academy of Music and the Arts, is retiring after 22 years of service.

Zo Zielinski, Hope Academy Program Assistant, accepted a full-time position at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild as a teaching artist in their design studio.



Welcome to New Nursery Staff

We are excited to welcome Jes Evans to our Nursery staff on Sunday mornings.

Jes lives in Rochester, Pennsylvania, with her two dogs, Rosco and Zohar. During the week, she enjoys working with dogs in daycare and boarding environments. Her days off are often spent reading books and discovering new parks and trails for her dogs, as well as spending time with her nieces. Jes is joyful and welcoming, enjoys learning, has studied theology in college and graduate school, and has work experience in both childcare and faith formation.

The Nursery is now staffed on Sunday morning, 8:30 am–12:30 pm, by Carmen Blanco and Jes Evans, who are looking forward to singing songs, telling stories, and facilitating play that helps kids experience church and learn about God's love.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry



Spiritual Gathering

You are invited to attend our LGBTQIA+ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering on **Sunday, September 1**, 11:30 am. Join us and share roundtable discussions over lunch. Thinking about attending this group for the first time? This is the time to come. 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 Jen King at JenniferK@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x222.

Good News

- Congratulations to Tyler & Bethany Bray on the birth of their son.
- Congratulations to Kai Everett and Lana Mailia Swan, children of David and Lauren Swan, who recently celebrated their baptisms.
- Congratulations to **Rebecca McGregor** and **Christopher Reiner** who were married on August 3.

Thanks

I sincerely thank the Justice Committee and everyone who helped plan, volunteered, and attended the celebration of the completion of my doctoral in ministry degree. I was overwhelmed by your well wishes and kind words. You will never begin to know how much it meant to be celebrated by ELPC and everyone who has walked with, encouraged, and prayed for me over the years as I completed my classes, conducted research, and wrote my dissertation.

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge and thank those of you who contributed to purchasing my new robe with doctoral bars.

I thank God for every one of you!

With gratitude and love,

—The Rev. Dr. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

Prayers

We offer our prayers of comfort to:

- Shawna, Pat and Finn Templeton, on the death of Shawna's mom, Donna Wilkes
- Debbie Hurrell on the death of her sister, Beth Hurrell
- The family of Sean Bara, Minister of Music at First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh
- Dr. Charma Dudley and family on the passing of her cousin, George Merritt Young

“...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.”

Let's Get Free Art Show



ELPC's Justice and Worship, Music, and the Arts (WMA) Committees invite you to an art show featuring work from the permanent collection of Let's Get Free: The Women and Trans Prisoner Defense Committee. The show, ***Abolitionist Expressions***, includes paintings, collages, and other artwork created by people who are or have been

incarcerated. The artwork will be on display in the Highland and Trustees Rooms, **September 22–October 20**. Stop by on Sundays, 12–2 pm, or Wednesdays, 5:30–7 pm.

We're in need of volunteer “gallery sitters,” to be onsite during the times when the exhibit will be open. If you're interested and available, contact Vivienne Selia at vselia@comcast.net.

A presentation on the societal impact of the death penalty, mass incarceration, and inequities in our legal system is being planned for **Sunday, October 13**. Keep a look out for details.

Learn more about Let's Get Free at LetsGetFree.info.



BACK TO BROADWAY

Sunday, September 29 | 3 PM

Our new season of *Cathedral Concerts* kicks off on **Sunday, September 29**, 3 pm, with Back to Broadway. Join us in the Sanctuary for an afternoon of show tunes from past and present, featuring ELPC's own section leaders.