

Reaching Out

newsletter of east liberty presbyterian church

October 2024



Pastoral Message

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

On the last day of Trinity Youth Conference, participants can be found scribbling notes on small pieces of paper and stuffing them in the shoes of friends, which have been arranged alphabetically in the worship area. On these “shoe notes,” people write a few words about how much others have meant to them and how blessed they have been to have their companionship during the week-long conference and beyond. Shoe notes are treasures that remind you of how much you can mean to another with a smile, word of encouragement, belly laugh, or prayer. Shoe notes can be read and re-read on rainy days to remind you that you are loved, even when you feel lonely or cranky.

It comes as no surprise to me that as I prepare to wrap up my 22-year ministry at ELPC, I am calling to mind a practice I’ve shared with youth and young adults through the years—that’s how my ministry started after all! I wish that I could write each one of you a shoe note to tell you what you mean to me, and thank you personally for the moments we have shared that have inspired me, encouraged me, challenged me, stretched me, nurtured me, and loved me. *Continued on page 2*



Sowing the Seeds of Peace

The Peace and Global Witness Offering (P&GWO) encourages the people of God to cast off anxiety, fear, discord, and division, and embrace God’s mission of reconciliation to those around us and the world. Every year on World Communion Sunday, ELPC joins congregations across the globe to celebrate the sacrament of The Lord’s Supper and joins Presbyterian churches to receive the P&GWO.

The proceeds from the P&GW offering empower and encourage individuals and congregations to be peacemakers in the world. This year, the Mission Board voted to donate 25% of the locally maintained offering to the Center That Cares. CARES’ mission is to create a network of internal and external opportunities to prepare each child and young adult to achieve their life plans and goals in a safe, dependable, nurturing environment. So, please give generously on **World Communion Sunday, October 6**, when ELPC will receive this special and impactful offering.

Sunday Services

**Celebration of the Lord’s Supper*

Journey Worship | 8:45 am

Theme: Patience

- Oct. 6* Pastoral Candidate
- Oct. 13 Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
- Oct. 20 Rev. BJ Woodworth
- Oct. 27 Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Sanctuary Worship | 11 am

- Oct. 6* Pastoral Candidate
- Oct. 13 Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy
- Oct. 20 Rev. BJ Woodworth
- Oct. 27 Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

Taizé Prayer Service

Prayerful Song & Quiet Meditation

Wednesdays | 7 pm

Rev. BJ Woodworth



Pittsburgh Presbytery Calls a New General Minister

On August 30, the Pittsburgh Presbytery called Rev. Jessica McClure Archer as its next General Minister. Rev. McClure Archer has served as the Senior Pastor of Sampson Mills Presbyterian Church for the last seven years. She will officially begin her role as General Minister on October 1. More information on Rev. McClure Archer is available at pghpresbytery.org.

East Liberty Presbyterian Church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

Staff Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

*Acting Co-Pastor and
Pastor for Mission Ministries*
PatriceFS@coh.net | x230

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

*Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life,
Taizé, and Transitional Ministries*
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Wil Forrest

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Sara Hackett

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Dr. Edward Alan Moore

Music Director and Organist
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Jim Tinnemeyer

Director of Administration and Facilities
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Rachelle Calfee

Bookkeeper
RachelleC@coh.net | x234

Jen King

Administrative Assistant to the Pastors
JenniferK@coh.net | x222

Norma Meyer

*Administrative Assistant to Worship
& Music and Communications*
Norma@coh.net | x211

The Rev. Dr. Robert Chesnut

Pastor Emeritas



**East Liberty
Presbyterian Church**

www.ELPC.church

Pastoral Message Continued

But that task is so large I wouldn't know where to begin or end. So for now, here is a note to all of you:

Dear ELPC,

"Thank you" feels like an inadequate phrase to express the breadth of gratitude I feel **for** you and **toward** you for the ministry we have shared together over the last 27 years.

And honestly, we've shared more than a ministry. We've shared LIFE.

We've navigated heartache and conflict and a global pandemic. We've laughed and created and assisted those in need. We've celebrated weddings and births and adoptions and baptisms and graduations. We've grieved our loss as those we love have died, and we've reminded each other of the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ each time.

We've sung and worshiped and embraced and clapped and asked questions and prayed. We've shared meals...especially pizza. (We've had A LOT of pizza together.) We've been nourished by the loaf and cup prepared for us by Christ, and by the Communion we've shared in the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

We've climbed walls, square-danced, marched, processed, played hide-and-seek, heard our voices echo as we've climbed the spiral stairs to the belltower. We've traveled for retreats and mission trips. We've solved problems and offered support when there was no solution to be found.

Thank you for the deep honor of sharing your lives with me in so many rich and beautiful ways. Thank you for sharing my life with me, for encouraging my gifts, for welcoming my family.

Most importantly, perhaps, is this:

Thank you for daring to witness to the radically hospitable love of God in Christ well before it was acceptable to do so. Thank you for showing this spiritual seeker what it meant to be a family of faith who is willing to live out the gospel in word and deed. Thank you for being a community of faith who truly embraced and welcomed and longed to be a haven for ALL of God's children—especially those who had heard otherwise.

Thank you for giving me hope that church, although not perfect, could be faithful, prophetic, and relevant—and for opening yourselves to me so that I could see that I too could be a part of a church that would welcome ME rather than restricting my forms of service. Thank you for helping me to identify God's call on my life and encouraging me to step out in faith.

Thank you for loving me, and thank you for letting me love you.

I will miss you individually and corporately as we each embark upon this next chapter of ministry and life. AND I continue to give thanks to God for you, being fully confident that the One who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Thank you all.

With deep love and gratitude,

Pastor Heather

ELPC Will Honor Linda Addlespurger



ELPC expresses deep appreciation to Linda Addlespurger, program director of Hope Academy of Music and the Arts, for her 22 years of diligent and creative leadership of this outreach program to children and youth of ELPC and the larger East Liberty community.

In 2002, Linda took the reins as Hope Academy's program director and proceeded to:

- Expand the offerings of private and group lessons in music, dance, and theatre
- Market the program to youth and families, allowing them opportunities to participate in the arts on a sliding-scale cost, based on family income
- Seek and cultivate relationships with both funding and arts organizations
- Hire gifted musicians to provide excellent instruction to hundreds of youth
- Showcase the talents of the youth well beyond the walls of ELPC
- Ensure safe and appropriate practice space within ELPC, multiple nights of the week and Saturdays

Linda retired from Hope Academy on September 30, 2024. She plans to pursue other interests and spend more time with her family.

Celebrating 25 Years of Hope Academy

ELPC history shows that in 1999, under the leadership of Dr. J. Richard Szeremany, Director of Music, the Hope Academy of Music and the Arts of ELPC was birthed. Dr. Szeremany was a strong believer in the importance of music and art education for all children and youth. He observed that such programming was being reduced, if not eliminated from public schools. And so, via his leadership and that of ELPC staff and congregation, including the Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy and then Director of Christian Education Judy Menk, the program was organized and has flourished for 25 years.

Highlights of Hope Academy's history include:

- A highly active program of private and group lessons—including piano, violin, guitar; and in dance for ballet, tap, hip hop; and African drumming
- Financial support from leading Pittsburgh foundations—such as the Heinz, Buhl, and Grable Foundations—as well as some corporate funding
- Evolution of HAT co (Hope Academy's Theater Company), which offered performance opportunities for students and also led to multi-year participation in Pittsburgh's Shakespeare Festival. There top awards were won by Hope Academy participants for their delivery of various Shakespearian monologues.
- Development of partnerships/relationships with Pittsburgh Ballet, Shena Simmons Dance Group, and other arts groups to ensure excellent instruction
- Enrollment as many as 350 children per week who attended programs
- Increased financial support by ELPC during more recent years as other funding sources have diminished

The future of Hope Academy is uncertain at this time. Funding has not been identified past the end of 2024. A review will be conducted of the current environment of music and arts education in this region, as well as possible new funding sources, and a recommendation on program's future will be presented.

Let us celebrate loudly the success of Hope Academy and its 25 years of service!

You're Invited to a Special Reception

Join us following Sanctuary worship on **Sunday, October 27**, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Hope Academy and the long-time leadership and accomplishments of Linda Addlespurger.

Come to the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms to celebrate and enjoy light refreshments.

Ready to Vote?

A Justice Committee ad hoc group is available to get you ready to vote and prepare you to encourage others to vote. We know that this is a consequential election. Join us on **Sundays, October 6 & 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.

Flight Behavior: Book Study

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee is reading *Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver. Set in Appalachia, the novel chronicles a community's reactions to the astonishing arrival of thousands of monarch butterflies, which have forgone their winter migration due to warming temperatures in northern climates. It presents the clash between protecting the environment and carving out a livelihood for individuals.

Join their Zoom discussion on **Thursday, November 21**, 7 pm. Questions? Contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net.

Christian Education

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

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Nursery for Kids up to Age 3

Our Nursery is now staffed on Sundays, 8:30 am-12:30 pm. Children sing songs, hear stories, and engage in play to learn about God's love.

Children Age 4–Grade 3

Children are invited to *Sunday School: Sacred Stories for Kids* after the Moments with our Children in the Sanctuary (11:15 am). Using the Godly Play curriculum, kids hear, see, touch, and retell the sacred stories of our faith while asking "I wonder ..." questions and responding with art. Children also pray, sing, and share a simple snack.

Parents pick up their kids after worship in Room 206.



Tweens in Grades 4–6

Youth are invited to *Sunday School: Sacred Stories for Tweens* after the Moments with our Children in the Sanctuary (11:15 am). Tweens dig into Bible stories through games, conversations, crafts, drama, and teamwork to discover what these stories mean to them in today's world.

Parents pick up their kids after worship in Room 207.

Teens in Grades 7–12

On **October 6**, 9:45–10:45 am, high school youth are invited to join us for breakfast and Sunday School in the Second Floor Parlor.

Journey with Scripture | Highland Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Henk Bossers and other class members

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. Contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net for details.

Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza | gpuza9@gmail.com

October 6: American Guns are Fueling Mexico's Supply of Illegal Drugs to the U.S. In this video, investigative reporter Mariana van Zeller uncovers the supply chain of American guns being smuggled into the hands of drug cartels, fueling the massive gun violence in Mexico, as they supply the U.S. with illegal drugs.

October 13: Russia's Persecution of Ukrainian Christians

Independent Ukraine has enjoyed a robust tradition of religious freedom, with a variety of faiths and many Christian denominations. Unfortunately, Russia has little tolerance for independent belief systems, wanting instead for all churches to be controlled by the Kremlin. Occupying authorities under orders from the Kremlin have been particularly harsh toward Protestant Christians and their institutions, often painting them as agents of the U.S. This video will examine the foundations and history of Ukraine's Christian diversity, and Russia's persecution of Christians in the occupied territories of Ukraine.

October 20: Christian Nationalism | Part 1 of 3

Daniel Aleshire will be with us to explore the relationship of church and state in the American colonies at the beginning of nationhood, and how the church/state issue moved through U.S. history after the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution.

Daniel Aleshire served 12 years as a seminary professor, was staff of the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada in 1990, and served as Executive Director from 1998–2017 (ATS membership includes more than 280 Mainline, Evangelical, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic seminaries and theological schools.) Since retirement from ATS, he has been a member of the Board of Directors at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. His wife, Jo Ellen Aleshire, is a deacon at ELPC.

October 27: Christian Nationalism | Part 2 of 3

Daniel Aleshire will be with us to explore ways to define Christian nationalism and the findings of three significant sociology of religion studies about this political movement: A 2022 study by the Pew Research Center; a 2023 study by Public Religion Research Institute and the Brookings Institution, and 2022 study *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* by Philip Gorsky and Samuel L. Perry.

Soul Food | Good Samaritan Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

We will be discussing chapters 5–12 (two chapters a week) of *Always a Guest* by Barbara Brown Taylor.

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

Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry



Sunday, October 20: Teen Corn Maze

Following Sanctuary worship, youth in grades 7–12 are heading to Gearhead Farms in Murrysville for a Corn Maze and Hayride! The cost is \$20 to cover the maze and lunch. Scholarships are available. We will return to ELPC at 5:30 pm. RSVP to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

Sunday, October 27: Tween Pumpkin Carving

Youth in grades 4–12 are eating lunch and carving pumpkins from 12:30–2 pm. Friends are welcome! RSVP to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

Club 116 on Wednesdays

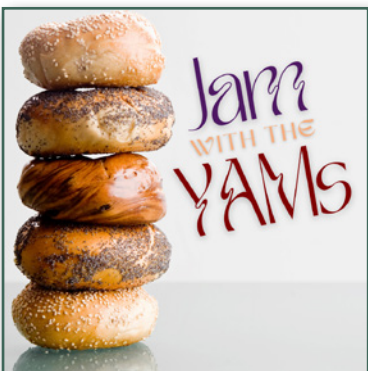
Kids in grades 1–6 are invited to **club 116**, our midweek youth group ministry, on Wednesdays, 4:30–6:30 pm. We have Bible study, crafts, games in the gym, and dinner together! For more information, email Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.



Youth Group on Thursdays

Our new Youth Group gathers on Thursdays, 4:30–7 pm. On **October 3, 10, & 17**, we will follow our normal schedule of hanging out, dinner (5 pm), games, God talk and prayer.

And make sure to join us on **October 24** for our Fall Fest to make apple cider and s'mores! We will not meet on October 31!



Young Adult Ministry

Sunday, October 13: Jam with the YAMs!

Are you 18–40? Do you love bagels? Then join us for Jam with the YAMs (Young Adult Ministry). We will gather in the Harambe Room for bagels, coffee, and fellowship. Hope to see you there! Questions? Contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

In November, we will return to our regular third Sunday schedule.

Children & Families

Sunday, October 6: Open Gym with Coffee & Donuts

Parents and kids are welcome to hang out, drink coffee or juice, eat a donut, and play in the ELPC Gym on the first Sunday of every month, 9:45–10:45 am.

If you miss the informal conversations that happened at Parenting Circle, want to meet other parents, just love basketball or scooters, then this is for you! This also is perfect for parents of older teens (grades 7–12) who have Sunday School at the same time.



Sunday, October 13: Family Bowling

Families with children and teens are invited to stay after Sanctuary worship for pizza and bowling.

Please RSVP to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.



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

The next family event is on Sunday, November 10. Plan on joining us to enjoy lunch and make art!

WMI Conference & W. Don McClure Lecture

What might we learn from listening to our siblings in Christ around the globe, as we partner in mission together? Join Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for the **2024 World Mission Initiative Conference and W. Don McClure Lecture, Friday–Saturday, October 11–12**. This year's theme is *Mission in the Margins: Lessons and Practices from the Global Church*.

Dr. Harvey Kwiyani, mission scholar and practitioner, will be the keynote speaker. With Dr. Kwiyani's expertise in the history and missiology of African Christianity, we hope this conference will inspire and equip mission leaders to learn from our local and global partners in mission.

The conference will include workshops and a panel discussion.

For registration details and more information, visit pts.edu.

Presbyterian Women in ELPC is a sponsor of this conference.

Mission in the Margins: Lessons and Practices from the Global Church



Oct. 11-12, 2024
In Person and Online



www.pts.edu/WMI-conference-2024



Presbyterian Women Bible Study

Let Justice Roll Down: Land Justice

Tuesday, October 1 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)

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

The psalmist declared, “The Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). In this understanding, humans are tenants on the land; put there “to work for” and “to serve” the land. We have much to atone for as we survey the Hebrew Bible’s complex message about land and reflect on our own US history of separating Indigenous peoples from their land. For millennia, oppressors have claimed their violent conquests were ordained by God and taken land from Indigenous people, denying them the ability to grow subsistence food and leaving them impoverished.



Artwork: “Seasons”
by Lorraine Roy

Our Tuesday Bible Study will be followed by a potluck lunch in the Fellowship Room. 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.

Spiritual Life

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life, Taizé, and Transitional Ministries

In October and November, we have opportunities to be with and hear two of the powerful female authors we, at ELPC, have had the chance to be with over the last few years. In June 2021, we had an online retreat with Cole Arthur Riley, and on Thursday nights in fall 2022, we read through and discussed Valrie Kaur’s book, *See No Stranger*. These two women have impacted many of us immensely! I hope you will try to make time to come out and be with them this fall.

Tuesday, October 15: Revolutionary Love Tour with Valarie Kaur 6–9 pm

In the thick of a divisive election season, join visionary civil rights leader Valarie Kaur in an immersive experience of storytelling, music, song, ancestral wisdom, and community-building. Join others in a space for soulful introspection, deep listening, and courageous action. You will leave with the tools needed to lead with love and courage in your daily life. Register at tiny.cc/revolutionary-love-tour.

Saturday, November 2: A Day with Cole Arthur Riley 9 am–2 pm

Join the Alliance for Honor and Repair to spend a day with Cole Arthur Riley. Cole is the creator of *Black Liturgies* and author of *This Here Flesh*. She is a native of Pittsburgh and will be offering her wisdom and sharing from her liturgies. Cole will be speaking on Dignity, Justice, Lament, and Solidarity.

What is our story and where does it begin? How can you practice justice and reconciliation in the mundane and in the systemic? What does it mean to exist in solidarity with another? The cost is \$20. The event will be held at Sixth Presbyterian Church. Learn more at tiny.cc/cole-arthur-riley.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry



Spiritual Gathering

You are invited to attend our LGBTQIA+ Ministry's next Spiritual Gathering on **Sunday, October 13**, 12:30 pm. Join us to share lunch and conversation. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike are welcome!

Questions? Please contact Wil Forrest at wil@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x218**. A Zoom option will be offered only if expressed need is shared with Wil prior to the Friday before the gathering.

God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.

Amen to Action

On **Saturday, November 2**, 8 am–12 pm, join with other volunteers from ELPC and more than 250 other neighbors from across 10 local congregations and nonprofits to pack 100,000 meals for Pittsburghers at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Register at tiny.cc/amen-to-action. Questions? Contact anyone on Neighbors Committee or email rforloines@gmail.com.

Be Good Stewards of Our Church and Staff

This is God's house that we have been entrusted with. We know that our building is very old and it takes a lot of work from all of us to keep it looking good. We have a Property Committee that is dedicated to deciding how to fund the expenses of keeping our building in working order.

Our staff works hard to keep the building clean and in good working order. Each staff member contributes to a building we can take pride in. During the week, we have dozens of different groups using our building. Each week, we have hundreds of people worshiping and engaging in educational programming.

Congregation members can help by taking pride in how our building looks. We can pick up after ourselves and each other. We can put away things that we used or moved, close windows and doors that we opened, and turn off lights when we leave a room for the day. We can take care of furniture and property as if it were our own. Let a staff member know if we have damaged something that will need repair. Invite building guests to show their respect by picking up after themselves.

One of the most important things we can do is show appreciation and gratitude for our staff. Recognize the preparations that have been made for our clean and safe use of the building. Say "thank you" to them for the time and care they put into preparing for us to use our church. Be patient and respectful when they are busy with their responsibilities before asking them to do something for you. Our staff are here to help us take care of *OUR* building and worship spaces.

—Human Resources Committee

ELPC People

If you have news to share, contact Jen King at JenniferK@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x222.

Good News

Please welcome our new members and friends:

- Evan Adcock
- Denise Barricella
- Brendan Bogolin
- LaVerne Davis
- Caroline Hough
- Julie Millhouse
- Alexander Payton
- Kelsey Stark,
- Lauren & David Swan

Prayers

We offer our prayers of comfort to:

- Evelyn Wrzosek and family on the death of her brother, Alex Turoczi, who passed away August 15. Alex's wife passed away earlier this year.
- Larry White, former Hope Academy student and member of the ELPC Praise Team. His cousin died tragically over Labor Day weekend.
- Linda Addlespurger on the death of her husband, Mitchell Barutha, who passed away September 11. Please hold Linda and her entire family in your prayers.

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, sign up by October 6 at tinyurl.com/ELPCconnect.

“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.”



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, 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).

Art Show & Panel Discussion: Explore the Experience of Incarceration

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.

Let’s Get Free’s mission is working to “...end perpetual punishment, build a pathway out of the prisons back to our communities through commutation reform, support successful possibilities for people formerly and currently incarcerated, and shift to a culture of transformative justice.” Learn more at [LetsGetFree.info](https://letsgetfree.info).

The artwork will be on display in the Highland and Trustees Room on Sundays, 12–2 pm, and Wednesdays, 5:30–7 pm, through **October 20**.

A panel presentation exploring the experience of incarceration from multiple perspectives will be held following Sanctuary worship on **Sunday, October 13**, in the McKelvy Room. Panelists include etta cetera, Rev. Dr. Tami Hooker, Barbara Jewell, and Rita Nordquist. Light refreshments will be provided.

