



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)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Hope



Genealogy of Christ by Lauren Wright Pittman

DECEMBER 1, 2024 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light if only we’re brave enough to see it, if only we’re brave enough to be it.
— Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate

PRELUDE

“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645”

Johann Sebastian Bach
Based on *Glory to God* #349
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, organ

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz

* SHARING GOD’S PEACE

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.
People: Y también contigo.

The Rev. Dr. Diaz
The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Hear the call to sing praises to our God.
People: We come with open hearts to sing our truth.
Leader: From all ends of the earth, we seek God’s presence.
People: **May God’s presence draw near. Hope is here.**
Leader: In God’s story, there is room for all.
People: There is room for every story. Hope is here.

Tim, Allison, Darrah and Raylan Seidel

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #378

“We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom”

MERLE’S TUNE

CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: In God’s house, everyone is welcome—those who seem like they have it all together, and those who feel like their world is falling apart. No matter who we are, there’s room for us here. With that confidence, we turn to God in prayer, speaking the truth of our lives.

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION & INTERCESSION

Leader: God of today and tomorrow, you say, “Bring your full self. There’s room for you here.”
People: **But we say, “Our lives are too messy.”**
Leader: You say, “Bring your hopes and your dreams. There’s room for you here.”
People: **But we say, “It’s too risky to hope.”**

The Rev. Woodworth

Continued on next page...

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

Dec 1 • First Sunday of Advent

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

Leader: You say, "Bring your grief and your prayers. There's room for you here."
People: **But we say, "Some things are easier to forget."**
Leader: God of today and tomorrow, we know in our hearts that there's room for us here.
People: Forgive us for withholding our full selves from you. Forgive us for giving only our Sunday best.
Leader: Help us remember, today and tomorrow,
People: **There's room for every story. Amen.**

TIME OF SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE & FORGIVENESS The Rev. Woodworth

Leader: Friends, from generation to generation, this is 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 #90 (*sing 3x*) "Wait for the Lord" WAIT FOR THE LORD

READING The Rev. Woodworth

from the book "We Are Beloved" by Kristen Vincent

All of us have pain in our lives, to varying degrees. Our pain has a way of drowning out the sound of our truth, that place deep within us that always has known we are God's beloved. This means the spiritual life is, in part, about recovering our voice and returning to our truth. It's a journey forward and a journey back: forward toward the voice of the One who made us, back to the truth that always has been in us. We clear away the mess of the lies and noise that tell us we are not worthy until we can see with great clarity that we are God's beloved.

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN Sara Hackett

Children of any age are welcome to come forward for Moments with our Children. Afterwards:

- Children age 4-6th grade will go to Sunday School: Sacred Stories. Parents will pick up their kids after worship (age 4-3rd grade in Room 206; grades 4-6 in Room 207).
- Children age 3 and younger can play, sing songs and hear stories in the nursery from 8:30 am-12:30 pm.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY Tim, Allison, Darrah and Raylan Seidel

Leader: As the days grow colder, we long for warmth. As the days grow shorter, we long for light. We light candles to remind ourselves that the earth continues to turn and the light will come again. As we begin our advent journey, we long for Christ. We light candles to remind one another that Christ will come again. Today, we light the candle of hope.

The first candle is lit.

People: Our hope is in Christ who makes all things new. May those who feel hopeless take strength from the light of this candle. May those who are filled with hope shine with the light of Christ. Amen.

* HYMN (*see insert*) "Through the Ages" AWAY IN A MANGER

SCRIPTURE LESSON OT page 835
The Rev. Dr. Diaz

SERMON "There's Room for Every Story" The Rev. Dr. Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

MINUTE FOR MISSION The Giving Tree Todd Hoffman

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

OFFERING INVITATION

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.



Todd Hoffman

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Thou Shalt Know Him When He Comes”

Mark Sirett

Thou shalt know him when he comes, not by any din of drums, nor his manners, nor his airs, nor by anything he wears. Thou shalt know him when he comes, not by crown or by gown, but his coming known shall be, by the holy harmony which his coming makes in thee. Thou shalt know him when he comes. Amen.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION

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.

— SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER —

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Rev. Dr. Diaz

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Rev. Woodworth

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.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

The Rev. Woodworth

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Rev. Dr. Diaz and The Rev. Woodworth

SHARING BREAD & CUP

The communion elements are gluten-free bread and grape juice. The congregation is invited to come forward by using the center aisle to the communion servers where each may receive the bread and the cup, then returning to their seats via the side aisles to partake of the elements. Those seated in the transepts are asked to join the procession to the front to receive communion by entering one of the pews from the outside and proceed to the center aisle after those seated in the row. Those not able to come forward will be served in their seats.

COMMUNION HYMN #92

“While We Are Waiting, Come”

WAITING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The Rev. Woodworth

God, our hope, we give you thanks that you have given us this foretaste of the justice, righteousness, and peace of your promised new creation. Strengthen us with this heavenly food as we seek to serve your holy realm. Lead us to live in joyful expectation of the coming again in glory of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #82

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Dr. Diaz

POSTLUDE

“Wachet auf – Finale”

Wayne L. Wold
Based on Glory to God #349

As part of ELPC's mission to extend radical hospitality to all, our full worship service is now being livestreamed on Facebook 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. Should you have any questions, please see one of our pastors.

Please silence all electronic devices before the service begins.

◆ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz (he/him)
Liturgists: The Rev. BJ Woodworth (he/him)
Sara Hackett (she/her)
Todd Hoffman
Tim, Allison, Darrah and Raylan Seidel
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him),
Organist / Music Director
ELPC Chancel Choir
Beadles: Jo Ellen Aleshire
Tim Engelhardt
Crucifer: Mario Seneca
Sound: Tim Benedict
Wayne Gaines

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

If you would like to sponsor flowers for our weekly worship service in honor or memory of a loved one, contact Norma (412.441.3800 x211). The cost is \$250 a Sunday. Our beautiful arrangements are provided by Bloom Brigade (www.bloombrigade.com).

◆ SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP

Coffee and water are available in the Balaka Room.

◆ SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:45 am Journey Worship. An interactive, energetic service for those seeking a fresh encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Dec 8 — The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz preaching.

11 am Sanctuary Worship. Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.
Dec 8 — The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz 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 on Mondays

Rev. BJ Woodworth will lead a time on Zoom of 30 minutes of communal silence and guided meditation on scripture.

Mondays, 7:30 to 8 am

Meeting ID: 959 8065 3992 • Passcode: bestill

Tuesday Morning Zoom Prayer Group

Join Steve Evrard on Zoom for a time of scripture readings, responsive prayer, and interactive dialogue.

Tuesdays, 8 to 8:30 am

Meeting ID: 896 9680 6662 • Passcode: 116

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

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 see one of the pastors to attend, or contact Jen King for info on future classes (JenK@coh.net).

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

TODAY AT ELPC

Giving Tree

The annual *Giving Tree* is available which will help provide a blessed and exciting Christmas for children in our community. Gifts can also be chosen online at tiny.cc/elpc-giving-tree. Deacons will be available to help after worship today. Gifts and donations should be dropped off at ELPC no later than Sunday, Dec 8.

Advent Devotionals Available

Advent devotionals which include visual art, written reflections, poems, hymns, and journaling prompts are available around the church for your use during the season.

ELPC Officer Nominations for 2025 Due Today

The congregation is invited to nominate members of ELPC for the office of Elder, Deacon, and next year's Nominating Committee (ONC). Guidelines and nomination forms are available in the church mailroom and on the church website. Complete the form online by scanning this QR code.



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 Gretchen Chapman. The *Sanctuary service* DOD is Peta Harrigan Cole. She is seated in the East Transept (Highland Ave entrance).



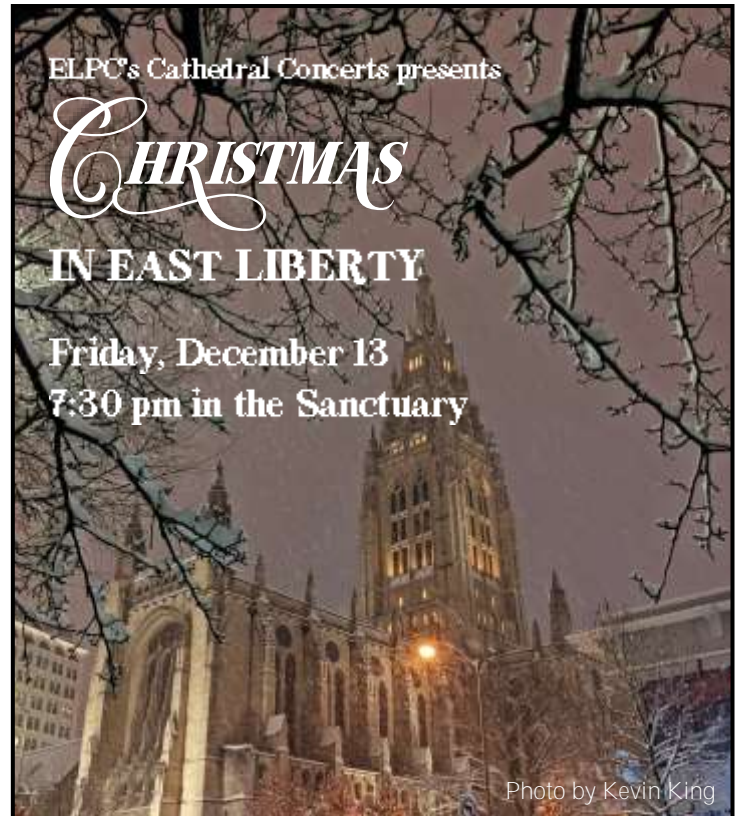
Stewardship Reminder

It's not too late to pledge your gifts in support of the mission and ministries of ELPC for 2025. Your pledges help the stewards of ELPC's finances prepare for the upcoming budget year. Pledge cards are available at the church, online, or contact Rachele Calfee (RacheleC@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x234).



Blues
CHRISTMAS
worship service
Friday
Dec 6
7 pm

This service will include candlelight, chants, thoughtful readings and meditative silence; and a time for comfort and hope.



ELPC's Cathedral Concerts presents
CHRISTMAS
IN EAST LIBERTY
Friday, December 13
7:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Photo by Kevin King

PW Bible Study — Dec 2 and 3

Presbyterian Women's 2024-2025 Bible Study *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters: Water Justice* will meet on Monday, Dec 2 from 7–8:30 pm (on Zoom), and on Tuesday, Dec 3 from 10 am–Noon (hybrid). There will be a potluck lunch after Tuesday's Bible Study. Please bring a dish to share; beverages will be provided. For more info, email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

A Retelling of the Christmas Story — Dec 15

Join us in the Sanctuary for a special re-telling of the story of Jesus' birth on Sunday, Dec 15 at 10 am. Led by the children and youth of our church—and once again written by the Rev. Ashely DeTar-Birt—this original pageant helps us celebrate anew the good news of Jesus' birth.

Following the pageant, all are invited to enjoy a hot chocolate reception in the Fellowship Room!

Middle schoolers (grades 6–8) are needed to be narrators. Practice will be on Sunday, Dec 8 from 12:15–1 pm (for narrators only). We will run through the script and assign parts.

There will be a dress rehearsal on Saturday, Dec 14 at 9:30 am.

Please contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net) if you would like to help in any way! Adult and youth participation is welcome!



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

Martha DeMarzi's friend Jim,
Doris Dick's cousin Eileen, Kathy Kiewra,
Mary Alice Lightle, Lisa Petrilli,
Gloria Ritchey,
Paul Seif and his family, and
Brandon Tenbrink's mother.

Committee Meeting This Week

Property..... Tuesday, Dec 3 @ 7:00 pm

For more info about how to join a meeting, please contact
Jen King (JenK@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x222).

LGBTQIA+ Ministry's Spiritual Gathering – Dec 15

You are invited to attend the LGBTQIA+ Ministry's spiritual gathering on Sunday, Dec 15 at 12:30 pm. Join us to share lunch and conversation. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike welcome! Contact Wil Forrest (Wil@coh.net).

Jam with the YAMs – Dec 15

If you're 18–40 years old, join members of our *Young Adult Ministry* (YAMs) after worship on Sunday, Dec 15 at Noon for pizza and bowling in ELPC's 1930s duck pin bowling alley. Old friends and new visitors are equally welcome to attend! RSVP to Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

5 PM FRIENDS & FAMILY SERVICE
10 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Both services will be held in the Sanctuary, feature the celebration of the Lord's Supper and candle lighting, and will be led by Pastor Michael Diaz.

In our

COMMUNITY



RCC Holiday Concert – Dec 7

The Renaissance City Choir will present *A Very Ruby Holiday* in concert on Saturday, Dec 7 at 7 pm at



ELPC! From your favorite holiday standards to asking Santa to *Bring Me a Man*, this concert will bring the holiday fun. RCC will be joined by the WVU Chamber Singers. Following the concert there will be a cookie social. For ticket info, visit www.rccpittsburgh.com.

Strengthen Your Finances with Open Hand Ministries

Are you considering homeownership but are worried about affordability? Are you struggling to maintain financial discipline in light of the increased cost of living? If you answered yes, you are not alone. To find how the Open Hand Ministries community can help you reach your financial goals, contact Wayne Younger (office@openhandpittsburgh.org; 412.924.1409).

Donations for Chapel Market

The Chapel Market is in need of winter clothing (**especially men's**) and full-sized toiletries items (soap, body wash, toothpaste, toilet paper, toothbrushes, lotion etc.) Donations can be left at the Highland Lobby, or dropped off at the Chapel Market when open (on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 5–7 pm, or Thursdays from 10 am–12 pm).

If you would like to volunteer in the Chapel Market, please contact anyone on the Neighbors Committee or Gerald McClendon (GeraldM@coh.net).

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Dec 8 ♦ 9:45 to 10:45 am

Journey with Scripture (Highland Rm+Zoom) – Relate the Psalms and the liturgical calendar's Gospel of Mark with the *Heavenly Hosts*, facilitated by Rev. Henk Bossers and other class members

Seekers (Garth Overlook Rm+Zoom) – “Re-Casting the Christ Story” by Bishop Spong, facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food (Good Samaritan Rm+Zoom) – A discussion of chapters 23 and 24 of *Always a Guest* by Barbara Brown Taylor, led by The Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members