



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)

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Peace

DECEMBER 8, 2024
11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP



War No More by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

TIME OF PREPARATION

Free what trembles with fear. Embrace what longs for acceptance. Forego anxiety and worry, which steal peace from the soul and add to inner turbulence. — *Joyce Rupp*

PRELUDE

“Partita on Winchester New”
Chorale-Meditation-Bicinium-Aria-Trio

Bruce Neswick
Based on Glory to God #96
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, organ

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz

* SHARING GOD’S PEACE

The Rev. Dr. Diaz

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

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

CALL TO WORSHIP

James and Heather Eng

Leader: Into Mary’s ordinary life, the angel Gabriel brought an unexpected message.
People: Into our lives, God longs to bring something new.
Leader: There’s so much to do, so much struggle in the world, so much hurt and pain.
People: Into the mess of our lives, Jesus comes again.
Leader: Let every heart, starting with ours, prepare to receive good news.
People: We open our hearts. The Prince of Peace is on the way.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN (*see insert*)

GABRIEL’S MESSAGE

“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

CALL TO CONFESSION

James and Heather Eng

Leader: Fear can be a good thing. It can help us be attentive while driving down the highway. It can help keep us safe. However, fear can also be harmful. For so many of us, fear of the other, fear of failure, or fear of the unknown has led us to make sinful choices in our lives. Let us now turn to God in prayer in confession.

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

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RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

James and Heather Eng

Leader: Patient God, you know just how often we make decisions from a place of fear rather than love.

People: Forgive us for allowing fear to take the place of logic, fanning unhealthy fires in our lives.

Leader: You know just how often we tuck your words, “Do not be afraid” on dusty shelves.

People: Forgive us for stubbornly holding onto our own point of view.

Leader: Silence the voices of scarcity, shame, and rejection, which feed so much of our fear.

People: Forgive us for giving fear the microphone. Recenter us and give us peace. Amen.

TIME OF SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S GRACE & FORGIVENESS

James and Heather Eng

Leader: Friends, even when we forget God’s words, God does not forget us. We are forgiven and loved.

People: En Jesucristo tenemos perdón.
¡Gracias a Dios!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

SUNG RESPONSE HYMN #243 (sing 3x) “Be Not Afraid”

BE NOT AFRAID

READING

“Love Comes Running” by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

James and Heather Eng

I remember
the first time I was afraid.
I was a child.
It was a nightmare.
(You remember those pesky
monsters under the bed.)
I remember
minutes felt like hours.
I begged
the sun to rise.
(Fear always begs
the sun to rise.)

Eventually,
after minutes that felt
like hours,
I cried out.
My dad came running.
He sat at the edge of my bed.
He said there is no reason
to be afraid.
He checked the closet and
the floorboards.
He rearranged my pillows.
He said, “I can stay.”

And that’s when I learned
that when you are afraid,
love always comes running.
Love says, “I can stay.”
That’s what God does for us.
God sits at the edge of the bed.
God checks the closet
and the floorboards.
God says, “Be not afraid.”
God stays until sunrise.
Love always comes running.
*May God bless the hearing of these
words. Amen.*

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Paul Seif

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

Brandon and Tim Tenbrink

Leader: Many years ago, the people of God dreamed of a better world and hoped and expected that God would bring about their desires for peace. We live in a world where people are not at peace with one another or at peace within themselves. We continue longing for the peace that Christ brings. Today, we light the candle of peace because we desperately need God’s peace in the midst of all we fear.

The second candle is lit.

People: **May this light be a reminder that the Prince of Peace is coming. May we, as God’s children, embody peace in all that we do. Amen.**

Dec 8 • Second Sunday of Advent

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

* HYMN (*see insert*) "Here I Am" PICARDY
SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:26-38 NT page 78
The Rev. Dr. Diaz

SERMON "God Meets Us in our Fear" The Rev. Dr. Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER The Rev. Dr. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

The Lord's Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español) or on pg. 45 (한국어) in the Glory to God hymnal.

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.

The Rev. Dr. Fowler-Searcy



OFFERTORY ANTHEM "E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come" Paul Manz
text from Revelation 22

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins, who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.

Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord, Almighty God, who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!

Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein, rejoice on earth, ye saints below, for Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!

E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more; they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607 OLD HUNDREDTH
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Christ, all creatures here below.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore. Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION The Rev. Dr. Diaz
The Rev. Dr. Fowler-Searcy

Leader:	El Señor esté con ustedes.	The Lord be with you.
People:	Y también contigo.	And also with you.
Leader:	Levantemos nuestros corazones.	Lift up your hearts.
People:	Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.	We lift them to the Lord.
Leader:	Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People:	Es justo dar gracias y alabanzas a Dios.	It is right to give God thanks and praise.
Leader:	God of all goodness, fill us with gratitude overflowing that we may share life and love in praise to you. Receive all that we offer and magnify our gifts, so that all will know the hope, peace, joy and love you offer to us in Christ Jesus.	
People:	Amén!	Amen!

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #106 "Prepare the Way, O Zion" BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

* CHARGE & BLESSING The Rev. Dr. Diaz

POSTLUDE "Partita on Winchester New – Toccata" Bruce Neswick
Based on Glory to God #96

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. Dr. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy
James and Heather Eng
Paul Seif
Brandon and Tim Tenbrink
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him),
Organist / Music Director
ELPC Chancel Choir
Acolytes: Duncan McCrimmon
Nate Willson
Beadle: Polly McQueen
Crucifer: Mario Seneca
Sound: Wayne Gaines
Bobby Jarsulic

◆ 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 15 — 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 15 — 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.

THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE 10.10.12.10

Basque carol

Para. Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924)

Arr. by Edgar Pettman and John Wickham

1. The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came, His
2. "For know a bless - ed moth - er you shall be, All
3. Then gen - tle Ma - ry meek - ly bowed her head, "To
4. Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born In

wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame; "All
gen - er - a - tions praise con - tin - ual - ly, Your
me be as it pleas - es God," she said, "My
Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn, And

hail," said he, "O low - ly maid - en Ma - ry,"
Son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told." Most
soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:

high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!

HERE I AM

Text: Anna Strickland (2022)

Music: Traditional French carol (17th cent.)



An - gel Ga - briel came to Ma - ry
Though his words were filled with glo - ry
Week by week in Ma - ry's bel - ly
Whe - ther we may feel we're rea - dy



In the hills of Ga - li - lee Ap - pre - hen - sion
Still the mes - sage brought great fear "Who am I to
God was grow - ing flesh and bone As her life and
For the task be - fore us laid God will streng - then



and con - fu - sion Filled her, won - d'ring what's to
bear the sav - ior With the path - way so un -
path were chang - ing Ne - ver was she left a -
and up - hold us Ev - en when the fear won't



be "Do not be a - fraid," the an - gel told the
clear?" "Here I am," she pledged; the an - gel Gab - riel
lone With her all the while was Ma - ry's ho - ly
fade We say, "Here I am," to God's tran - scen - dent



maid "God has high - ly fa - vored thee"
fled Quick - ly as he had ap - peared
child Pledge of "Here I am" of God's own
plan Trust - ing God to lend us aid

TODAY AT ELPC

Giving Tree

The annual *Giving Tree* helps provide a blessed and exciting Christmas for children in our community. Gifts and donations are due today. Donations can be made online at tiny.cc/elpc-giving-tree through the end of today.

Advent Devotionals Available

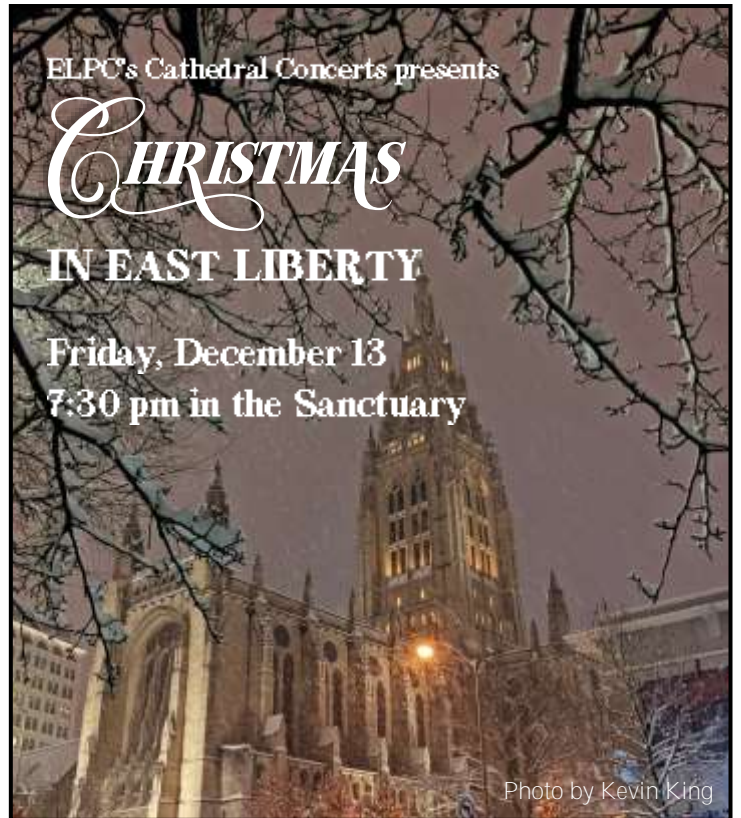
Advent devotionals which include visual art, written reflections, poems, hymns, and journaling prompts are available around the church for your use during the season.

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).



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.

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!

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).





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,
Lisa Petrilli,
Paul Seif and his family, and
Brandon Tenbrink's mother.

Condolences to Martha DeMarzi on her cousin's passing.

Committee Meetings This Week

Finance..... Tuesday, Dec 10 @ 5:30 pm
Youth & Young Adult..... Tuesday, Dec 10 @ 6:00 pm
Deacons Tuesday, Dec 10 @ 7:00 pm
Worship, Music, Arts Tuesday, Dec 10 @ 7:30 pm
Mission Board..... Thursday, Dec 12 @ 5:30 pm

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

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).

Offering Envelopes

If you receive offering envelopes in the mail and do not want them anymore, please contact Jen King to be taken off the mailing list (JenK@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x222).

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 Rachelle Calfee (RachelleC@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x234).

Christmas Joy Offering Received – Dec 22

We will receive the *Christmas Joy Offering* on Sunday, Dec 22 at all worship services. May you give generously in thanksgiving to God for the most perfect gift of all, the gift of Jesus Christ.

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.

In our

COMMUNITY



Blood Drive at PTS – Dec 11

A blood drive will be held at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (616 N Highland Ave, 15206) on Wednesday, Dec 11 from 9 am—2:30 pm. Everyone will receive a \$10 rewards gift card, and will also be entered for a chance to win one of five \$5,000 gift cards. Schedule an appointment at www.vitalant.org (search account code UG024), or please call 1-877-25VITAL.

Urge President Biden to Close Guantánamo Bay

President Biden has said in the past that he wants to close the detention center at Guantánamo Bay. These next few weeks are the last chance the Biden Administration has to fulfill its pledge to work toward a lawful solution for the men still held at Guantánamo Bay. Join the *National Religious Campaign Against Torture* in calling on the Administration to take action before the end of this term to transfer these men to countries that will respect their human rights. For more info, please visit tiny.cc/nrcat-letters.

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).

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Please note there will be no Adult Sunday School Classes next Sunday, Dec 15, so everyone can attend the children's Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary at 10 am.

Dec 22 ♦ 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) – “The Core of Our Religious Traditions” video by Karen Armstrong, facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food (Good Samaritan Rm+Zoom) – A discussion of chapters 25 and 26 of *Always a Guest* by Barbara Brown Taylor, led by The Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members