



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)

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER MAY 18, 2025 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares... For God may draw us to where we can never return. — *Annie Dillard*

MUSIC MINISTRY

“Andante with Variations in D”

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz

Everyone in worship today is encouraged to please sign your name in the red Friendship Books that are in each pew. Doing so will help ELPC maintain a pastoral connection with all who worship with us. Thank you!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Bazil Litzinger

Leader: Come, people of God! Come with your questions and doubts, your certainty and confusion.
People: We come to listen, to wonder, to be changed. Who are we to stand in God’s way?
Leader: God’s love is borderless. God’s welcome reaches farther than we can ever imagine.
People: We come to worship a God who includes the outsider and surprises the faithful.
Leader: Let us open our hearts to the wideness of God’s grace.
People: May God fill our hearts and make space for holy transformation. Alleluia!

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #280

“Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us”

EBENEZER

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Sara Hackett and Darrah Seidel

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.*

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Amazing Grace”

Westley Kopanic, *violin*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Michael Schenz and Beverly Harris-Schenz

Leader: Sometimes we get so caught up in tradition, in what feels safe or familiar, that we forget God is still speaking and moving in ways that surprise and unsettle us. We come today, not with shame, but with open hearts, ready to confess the ways we’ve stood in God’s way. Let us pray:

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

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Michael Schenz and Beverly Harris-Schenz

Holy and boundary-breaking God, you keep showing up in unexpected people, in unfamiliar places, and too often, we resist. We have drawn lines around who belongs and who does not. We've mistaken comfort for faithfulness. We've put up walls where you are building longer tables. We've ignored visions, silenced prophets, and questioned your mercy when it was poured out on those we didn't expect. Have mercy on us and forgive us.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Michael Schenz and Beverly Harris-Schenz

Leader: Friends, God meets us not with condemnation but with compassion.

People: **In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Bourée (Suite No. 3)"

Johann Sebastian Bach
Brady Conley, *viola*

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 15:7-9a (*Inclusive Bible*)

Michael Schenz

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 11:1-18 (*Inclusive Bible*)

Beverly Harris-Schenz

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN #288 (*remain seated; sing 3x*)

"Spirit of the Living God"

LIVING GOD

SERMON

"Who are we to stand in God's way?"

Rev. Dr. Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Presentation of: Natalia Goldin and Terry Hughes

Profession of Faith

Act of Baptizing

The Deacons and the Environmental Team of the Justice Committee partner to donate a tree seedling to *Tree Pittsburgh Heritage Nursery* for every baptism in our church.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND FRIEND

Reaffirming

Member: Brian Ragu Rayne

Members: Brianna (Bri) Allison, Daniel Justus Appadurai, Mark Broscoe, Molly Gunson,
Nathanael (Nate) Kegel, Jillian Malcolm, John Spiewak

Friend: Sharon Suritsky

SHARING GOD'S PEACE

Rev. Dr. Diaz

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **Y también contigo.**

And also with you.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Pittsburgh Pride

Wil Forrest, Carol Mullen, Reed Williams

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

OFFERING INVITATION

Thanks to everyone who has made a pledge for 2025. Your timely giving to fulfill your pledge helps us fulfill our mission to show God's unconditional love to all.

Please remember to write your name on your offering envelope. You can also scan this QR code to give online or visit www.ELPC.church/donate.

Wil Forrest



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

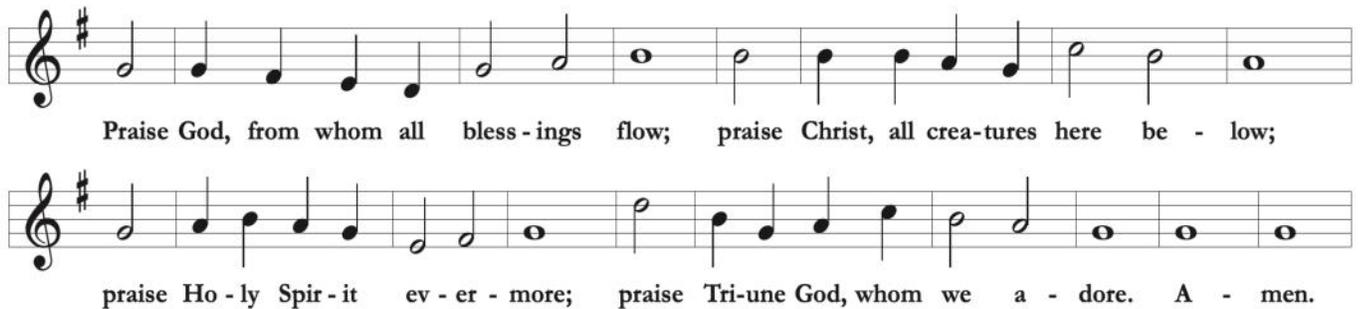
“If Ye Love Me”

Thomas Tallis

Text: John 14:15-17

* **DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607**

OLD HUNDREDTH



Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise Christ, all crea-tures here be - low;
praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more; praise Tri-une God, whom we a - dore. A - men.

* **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION**

Rev. Dr. Diaz

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes.

People: Y también contigo.

Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones.

People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.

People: Es justo dar gracias y alabanzas a Dios.

Leader: God of holy disruptions, with love in our hearts we bless the gifts and the embodiment of grace before us. May Divine Love awaken us to new perspectives and horizons, transforming us to transform this world. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

* **RECESSIONAL HYMN #482**

“Baptized in Water”

BUNESSAN

* **CHARGE & BLESSING**

Rev. Dr. Diaz

POSTLUDE

“Fanfare”

William Mathias
Dr. Moore, *organ*



Notes regarding the music sung in today's service are available on our website —

<http://tiny.cc/elpcworshipnotes>

You can also scan this QR code to be directed to that info on our website.



Our full worship service is 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. Assisted listening devices are available for our Sanctuary worship in the Usbers' Room. Please print your contact info and device number on the sign-out sheet if you need to use one. Please silence all electronic devices before the service begins.

◆ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz (he/him/él)

Liturgists: Sara Hackett (she/her)
Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministries

Wil Forrest, Bazil Litzinger
Carol Mullen, Reed Williams
Michael Schenz, Beverly Harris-Schenz
Darrah Seidel

Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him),
Director of Music and Arts

ELPC Chancel Choir
Westley Kopanic, *violin*
Brady Conley, *viola*

Beadle: Liz Hopkins

Crucifer: Linda Davis

Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

The flowers today are given in honor of Pastor Michael with love and gratitude from the ELPC Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee and Presbyterian Women. To God be the glory!

◆ SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:45 am.....**Journey Worship.** An interactive, energetic service for those seeking a fresh encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

11 am.....**Sanctuary Worship.** Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.

◆ 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

Labyrinth Prayer Walk

A 35-foot floor mat with curved paths leading inward; an ancient tool for walking and seated meditation.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

10 am to 7 pm



◆ 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

May 19 will be the final gathering until after Labor Day.

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 **sign your name in our red Friendship Books, and to stop by the Highland Ave entrance to be greeted by an ELPC welcomer.** They will be happy to answer any questions and to offer you more info about our programs, church activities, and volunteer services - and to offer you a small welcoming gift.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* on **Sunday, June 8 after the 10 am service** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. See Pastor Michael Diaz to attend, or contact Jen King to register or for info (JenK@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x222).

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

TODAY AT ELPC

Welcome Visitors!

Please stop by the Highland Ave entrance to be greeted by an ELPC welcomer. They will be happy to answer any questions and to offer you more info about our programs, church activities, and volunteer services - and to offer you a small welcoming gift.

Youth Sunday Worship

This morning we celebrate our youths' voices, gifts, and ideas—as well as honor our graduating high school students!

Alternative Transportation Challenge

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee would like to challenge the ELPC congregation to lower its transportation carbon footprint, which is one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions. We can make an impact by working together to care for God's creation, and help reverse inequities caused by climate change.

We hope you have joined the challenge to get to ELPC today by biking, walking, carpooling, using public transportation, or driving a hybrid or electric vehicle. If you are already doing this, great! Your carbon savings will be included! If you can't do one of these, we have alternate ways that you can participate.

Today we will gather data as people arrive, and report on the total carbon emissions saved compared to single occupancy gas vehicles. You can also complete the survey online at <https://tinyurl.com/AlternativeTransportSurvey>, or scan this QR code.



Secure indoor bicycle parking will be available in the Harambe Room. Members with electric vehicles and a biking champion will be present to demonstrate and provide information.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry's Spiritual Gathering

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

Pastor Michael's Installation Service

All are invited to the installation service of Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz today at 3 pm in the Sanctuary, when the Pittsburgh Presbytery will officially install him as Senior Pastor of ELPC. A *Pittsburgh Cookie Table Reception* will follow the service in the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms.



Tower Tour – May 25

Please join guide Steve Evrard for a tour of the tower on Sunday, May 25. Wear closed-toe shoes to participate, and gather in the Highland Lobby after the 11 am sanctuary worship service to join the tour.

New Book Study: A Children's Bible – May 29

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee has selected *A Children's Bible* by Lydia Millet for their next book study. Lydia Millet's prophetic and heartbreaking story of generational divide offers a haunting vision of what awaits us on the far side that might overwhelm us.

The book discussion will be held on Thursday, May 29 at 7 pm in the Fellowship Room and on Zoom. For more info and the Zoom link, contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net).

Summer Worship Schedule – Begins June 1

Our summer worship schedule begins on Sunday, June 1, with a combined service beginning at 10 am in the Sanctuary. Due to necessary repairs, we will not worship in the Courtyard this summer.

Vacation Church School – Volunteers Needed

Student registration is currently full, BUT please email Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net) if you would like to have your child added to the waitlist. Volunteers are still needed for Vacation Church School at ELPC on June 23-27 from 9 am-3 pm. Our theme this summer is LIVE it OUT: Discover How to Love like Jesus! Teens in 6th-12th grade and adult volunteers are needed; register at ELPC.church.

Donations Needed for Chapel Market

Please donate summer clothing, toiletries and diapers to the Chapel Market. Leave donations in Highland Lobby.

Labyrinth Available

For decades the Labyrinth at ELPC has been a vital and creative spiritual path for our church and neighbors and during the pandemic we had to suspend its weekly offering. It is available on:

Wednesdays and Thursdays

10 am—7 pm in McKelvy Room

(with the exception of June 12, 19, 25 and 26)

Volunteers Needed

We need 3 to 6 more people on our team to help with the set up and teardown of the labyrinth.

Set up happens on Wednesdays from 9-10 am; teardown is Fridays from 9-10 am.



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

Jean, Jon and struggling combat veterans, Linda, Matthew, Miriam, Rachel, Rudo, Sandrina and children, Sandy Blackburn, Carol Chontos' friend Sally, Ahmad Ghaznavi, Joe Kennedy, Barbara Lockie-Brown, Gail Mallory's cousin Rose, Tricia Mire, Lisa Petrilli, Michael Stapleton, and Pastor BJ Woodworth.

Committee Meetings This Week

Session Tuesday, May 20 @ 7:00 pm
Peace Thursday, May 22 @ 5:30 pm

Reckoning with ELPC's Tie to Enslavement – June 29

In 2022, our church family learned that one of our most revered founders and donors enslaved and sold two women, Nell and Poll, in the early 1800s. Over the past year, a small team of ELPCers has sought to learn more about these women and their lives—who were they beyond the scant details in the dehumanizing 1808 bill of sale? Join the Facing Systemic Racism Committee after 10 am worship in the Social Hall on Sunday, June 29 for a presentation on what we have learned about Nell, Poll, and their family, and for a time of discussion and reflection on what we must do to reckon with this part of our church's legacy. A light lunch will be provided.

Middle School Camp at Crestfield – July 20 to 25

Youth in grades 6–8 are invited to attend *Service Adventure Camp* from July 20 to 25, which combines Crestfield adventure with local missions and service opportunities. Campers will be sent out to local non-profits to learn about and assist those agencies, then swim or rest. 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 at camp. The cost is \$400 and scholarships are available. Contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

Thank You to Our Sunday School Teachers!

Make sure you check out the new children's Bibles in the Sanctuary pews this month given in honor of this year's Children and Youth Sunday School teachers.

A huge THANK YOU to our amazing teachers:

Sherry Anderson, Bruce Bancroft, Patricia Bancroft, Bethany Bray, Annie Cowan, Linda Davis, Sandy Edgecombe, Jim Eng, Carol Hoehn, Liz Hopkins, Joshua Lawrence, Heather Lawrence, Nancy Magee, Hannah Moon, Jan Pressman, Paul Seif, and Grace Taylor.

These teachers' creativity and passion for sharing God's sacred stories with our children is a gift to us all!

In our

COMMUNITY



Allegheny County Ballot Drop Boxes

The county is offering ballot drop boxes. You may securely return your own completed, signed and sealed ballot at any of the locations listed at this web page (includes dates and hours): www.alleghenycounty.us/Government/Elections/Ballot-Return-Sites. *Pittsburgh Voters: Remember that all voters can vote on the three Home Rule Charter Amendments.*

Pittsburgh Pride 2025 March and Festival – June 1

Our congregation is a proud participant in LAMP – LGBTQIA+ Affirming Ministries of Pittsburgh. While there are many Pride events sponsored by different groups in different neighborhoods around the area, the ONE big Pride event ELPC and LAMP will be participating in this year is *Pittsburgh Pride March and Festival* on Sunday, June 1.



The March will begin at noon on Liberty Ave, concluding at Allegheny Commons Park West where the Festival will take place. Sign up to volunteer at the booth on Saturday, June 1 (both lay and pastoral volunteers) at www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E48ADAB2DA4FAC25-56672328-pride. More info is available in the Highland Lobby.

Come out and celebrate while we share God's love with all God's people!

Juneteenth Parade – June 21

ELPC has had a presence in the *Juneteenth Parade* and this year is no exception! Join us on Saturday, June 21 at 10 am.

If you would like to walk or ride in the church van, let us know (space is limited). For info or to sign up, please contact Lenore Williams (LeeFabilli@aol.com).

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ADULTS

May 25 ♦ 9:45 to 10:45 am

Please note this is the final Adult Sunday School class until Rally Day in September.

Journey with Scripture (Highland Rm+Zoom) – Lectionary scriptural passages, facilitated by Rev. Henk Bossers

Seekers (Fellowship Rm+Zoom) – “The Prophets as Change Agents” video by Bishop John Spong, facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food (Good Samaritan Rm+Zoom) – A concluding discussion of *Necessary Risks* by Teri McDowell Ott, ending with chapter 10, led by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members