



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)

FALL KICK-OFF SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 7, 2025 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

It's not about right belief; it's about right practice.

— Cynthia Bourgeault

PRELUDE

“Fanfare”
“Rigaudon”
“Fanfare for the Common Man”

William Mathias
André Campra
Aaron Copland

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz, Rev. BJ Woodworth

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

Julie Millhouse

Leader: Today, we gather at the threshold of a new season.
People: God goes before us, around us, and within us. We are never alone.
Leader: God has searched us, and God knows us.
People: God knows us and loves us endlessly.
Leader: May we be renewed and led in the ways of Jesus.
People: We embrace the joy and cost of discipleship.
Leader: We lift our voices and hearts to sing.
People: We worship God with the love we bring! Alleluia!

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #826

“Lift High the Cross”

CRUCIFER

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 go to Sunday School: Sacred Stories. Parents pick up their kids after worship (age 4- 3rd grade in Room 206; grades 4-6 in Room 207). If this is your child's first time attending, please accompany your child upstairs and check in with the teachers.*
- *Children age 3 and younger can play, sing songs and hear stories in the nursery from 8:30 am-12:30 pm.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Julie Millhouse

Leader: Friends, following Jesus is not a half-hearted commitment. It calls for courage, honesty, and letting go of what holds us back. We confess not because God seeks to shame us, but because Christ longs to set us free from our excuses, fears, and divided loyalties. So let us approach God with humility, trusting that mercy is greater than our mistakes.

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

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Julie Millhouse

Holy One, you call us to follow you, but we confess that too often we follow only when it is easy. You invite us to carry the cross, yet we prefer comfort and convenience. Forgive us, O God. Renew our hearts with courage, reshape our lives with grace, and remind us that your love is worth every cost. Strengthen us to journey in your way, through Jesus Christ, our guide and companion. Amen.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Julie Millhouse

Leader: Friends, we serve a God of second chances.
 People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE #691 (verses 1 and 4 only)

LAND OF REST

"Lord, When I Came into This Life"

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 139:1-6 (Inclusive Bible)

Julie Millhouse

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.
 People: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 14:25-33 (Inclusive Bible)

Rev. Woodworth

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.
 People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN #432

"How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord"

REPTON

SERMON

"Be Careful What You Ask For"

Rev. Dr. Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

SHARING GOD'S PEACE

Rev. Woodworth

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

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

OFFERING INVITATION

Rev. Woodworth

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.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

arr. Dan Forrest
 based on *Glory to God* #35

* 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. (Interlude) A - men.

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.



— SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER —

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Rev. Dr. Diaz

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Rev. Dr. Diaz, 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 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 *(in the language or version closest to your heart)*

Rev. Dr. Diaz, Rev. Woodworth

The Lord’s Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español), or on pg. 45 (ἕλ-κρ-οῖ) in the hymnal.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Rev. Dr. Diaz, Rev. Woodworth

SHARING BREAD & CUP

Rev. Dr. Diaz, Rev. Woodworth

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. Those seated in the East Transept (the section near the Highland Entrance) will be directed by an usher to the walkway between the front and back section and will file in behind those in the first row of the back section. Those not able to come forward will be served in their seats. Please raise your hand and/or make eye contact with the roaming Communion server.

COMMUNION HYMNS

#527 *(opt. A; multiple times)*

“Eat This Bread”

BERTHIER

#525

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

LET US BREAK BREAD

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING *(in unison)*

Rev. Woodworth

God of resurrection, you have fed us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation. With thanksgiving in our hearts, empower us to be followers of Jesus and to share good news. Amen.

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #295

“Go to the World!”

SINE NOMINE

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

POSTLUDE

“Final from Symphony I”

Louis Vierne

Notes regarding the music sung in today's service are available on our website — <http://tiny.cc/elpcworshipnotes>.

Our full worship service is being livestreamed on Facebook and archived at www.ELPC.church. 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 Ushers' 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 Diaz (he/him/él)
Liturgists: Rev. BJ Woodworth (he/him)
Sara Hackett
Julie Millhouse
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
Ryan Croyle, *Guest Organist*
The Brass Roots:
Samuel Eisenhandler, *Trumpet*
David Gardner, *Trumpet*
Miranda Johnson, *Horn*
Abby Lannan, *Trombone*
Olivia Nixon, *Bass Trombone*
Abby Langhorst, *Timpani*
Xueqing Wu, *Percussion*
Beadles: Liz Hopkins and Polly McQueen
Crucifer: Jan Herzer
Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

The flowers today are in loving memory of Hattie E. Wainwright and Sarah J. M. Negley.

◆ 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

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

Cathedral Yoga

Yamuna will lead yoga in-person in the Sanctuary.

Wednesdays, 6 to 7 pm (before Taizé)

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** in each pew.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* on **Sunday, Sept 28 after the 11 am sanctuary service** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please see one of the pastors to attend, or contact Jen King to register or for more 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!

If you are joining us for the first time, we're glad you are here! Please do not forget to write your name and contact info in the RED friendship book in your pew. Pastor Michael will reach out to you for any prayer requests and to answer any questions you might have.

Open Gym and Coffee & Donuts

Parents, grandparents, and kids are welcome to hang out, drink coffee or juice, eat a donut, and play in the gym on the first Sunday of every month from 9:45-10:45am. The next event will be held today.

If you want to meet other families or just love basketball or scooters – this is for you! This is also perfect for parents of older teens (7th-12th grade) who have Sunday School at the same time.

Social Hour Today

In recognition of her 90th birthday, ELPC member Fran Wilson invites everyone for cake and refreshments in the Fellowship Room at Noon today. Drop by and congratulate her with birthday hugs and well wishes!



LGBTQIA+ Ministry's Spiritual Gathering

You are invited to attend the LGBTQIA+ Ministry's spiritual gathering after today's 11 am worship service. Join us to share lunch and conversation. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike welcome! Contact Wil Forrest to attend (Wil@coh.net).

Assisted Listening Devices

If you would like to use an assisted listening device to better hear the liturgy of our sanctuary worship service, please see one of our ushers. Please don't forget to return the device and headphones after the service. Please note the device will only work in the sanctuary.



Registration is Open for Hope Academy's Fall Term

Hope Academy of Music and the Arts is now accepting registrations and scholarship applications for the 2025 Fall Term. Learn more about our classes and private instrument lessons online at tiny.cc/hope-academy.

PW Bible Study Book – Sept 8

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study continues tomorrow, Monday, Sept 8 at 7 pm (on Zoom). For more info, please email PW.ELPC@gmail.com.

Start Your Week with Prayer & Reflection – Begins Sept 8

Join us for our Monday morning *Contemplative Prayer* sessions, starting Sept 8 at 7:30 am. Together on Zoom (Meeting ID: 959 8065 3992; Passcode: bestill), we will spend 20–30 minutes, quieting our souls, breathing, listening to and for that still small voice within through guided scripture meditation, silence, and music—all in community with others in our faith family.

Youth Group – Begins Sept 11

Together with youth in grades 7–12 from Sixth Presbyterian Church, we share dinner, pray, play, and explore faith through service projects, arts and crafts, conversations, silly games, and whatever else we dream up on Thursdays from 4:30-7 pm. Register online at ELPC.church, or contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

Visitor Sunday – Sept 14

Sept 14 is *Visitor Sunday* at ELPC. We encourage all members of the congregation to invite someone—a newcomer to Pittsburgh, a family member, friend, or neighbor to join us in worship. If you attend online, consider welcoming a friend or relative to participate online alongside you. Visitors will be encouraged to stop by our *Welcome Table* to receive a gift bag after either the Journey service or the Sanctuary service. The Membership & Outreach Committee is sponsoring a *Social Hour* after the 11 am service. A church tour will be provided as well.

Connections Groups are Forming this Fall – RSVP by Sept 14

Connections Groups are small groups of about 10 people who meet about once a month for an event such as a potluck dinner, restaurant meal, trip to a museum or cafe, walk the Reservoir, etc. These groups allow us to get to know each other, build community, and practice radical hospitality together. We'd love to have you join us! Sign up at tiny.cc/elpc-connections by Sept 14.



INQUIRERS CLASS Sunday, Sept 28 after 11 am worship

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* after the 11 am service on Sunday, Sept 28 in the Fellowship Room to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided.

Register online using this QR code, visit elpc.church/visit-us/becoming-a-member, or contact Jen King (Jenk@coh.net).





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

Brandon and family, Chuck, Dino,
Kevin's friends, Pam and family, Richard, Stan's partner
John, Zachary, Linda Benedict,
Rev. Henk and Michele Bossers, Linda Dorsey,
Sharon Geibel's mother Ruth, Marti Moore,
Jeff and Mary Pat Parson's daughter Meaghan,
and Donald Smith.

Committee Meetings This Week

- Finance** Tuesday, Sept 9 @ 5:30 pm
- Deacons** Tuesday, Sept 9 @ 7:00 pm
- Worship, Music, Arts** Tuesday, Sept 9 @ 7:30 pm
- Mission** Thursday, Sept 11 @ 5:30 pm

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

Young Adult Happy Hour – Sept 15

Kicking off at Pastor BJ's house in East Liberty on Monday, Sept 15 and continuing on the third Monday of every month from 6–7:30 pm, join us for appetizers and drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available). Details and RSVPs via evite — contact Sara Hackett for the link (SaraH@coh.net).

Monthly Family Events – Sept 21

As we begin our 2025–2026 program year, families are invited to join the Children and Families Ministry Team following the 11 am Sanctuary worship service on the third Sunday of each month for a family friendly event!

On Sunday, Sept 21, we will gather together for a picnic and games in the Play Yard on Balm Blvd. We also will talk about upcoming events and other need-to-know information. Contact Sara for more info (SaraH@coh.net).

In our

COMMUNITY



Die In + Funeral to Protect Trans Youth – Sept 8

Mourn UPMC's deadly decision to end gender affirming care for trans youth under 19 years old on Monday, Sept 8 at 3 pm in Mellon Square (downtown Pittsburgh) by attending a *Die In + Funeral* to protect these youth. Hosted by UPMC Providers for Trans Justice, ACT UP, and TransYOUning.

Email upmcproviders4transjustice@gmail.com for info.

Nell and Poll Documents at Heinz History Center – Sept 8

The Reparations Ministry Team and Facing Systemic Racism Committee invite you to the Heinz History Center Detre Library and Archives on Sept 8 at 10 am to view the primary sources we relied on for our research: the bills of sale for Nell and Poll, the registry of births of babies to enslaved mothers, and other documents that gave us insight into the lives of the family. We will provide a brief recap of the information from our program in June.

Attendance is free, but space is limited. Sign up online at <https://bit.ly/ELPC-HHC>.

Prayer Vigil for Immigrants – Fridays

The Friday morning *Prayer Vigil for Immigrants* adjacent to the ICE offices (3000 Sidney St, 15203, Southside) will continue through October. Please consider joining from 8-10 am as you are available. For more information, text Michele Bossers (412.303.9243).

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

September 14

– Adults –

*Adult classes are held from 9:45-10:45 am
in the rooms indicated below:*

Journey with Scripture – Highland Room + Zoom
Facilitated by Rev. Henk Bossers.

Seekers – Garth Overlook Room + Zoom
“Stones Cry Out – The Story Of Palestinian Christians” video. Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom
A beginning discussion of *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

– Children –

Sign up kids using this QR Code. Kids leave worship during Moments With Our Children. Parents pick up their children after worship in the rooms indicated below:



Children (age 4-grade 3) – Room 206

Tweens (grades 4–6) – Room 207

Teens (grades 7-12) – meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of month

• CHURCH TOURS •

Sept 14—Sanctuary/Chapel

Sept 28—Tower

(must pre-register for Tower Tour using this QR code)



Oct 19—Sanctuary/Chapel

Oct 26—Tower

Nov 9—Sanctuary/Chapel

Nov 16—Tower

Please gather in the Highland Lobby after the 11 am worship service to join any of our tours.



Sunday, 7 September 2025 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Sundays after Pentecost (like the Sundays after Epiphany) are sometimes called Ordinary Time - not because they are routine or mundane, but because their primary rhythm has to do with following the Sundays “in order.” Indeed, each Sunday is a celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead on the first day of the week, and it is this holy mystery that animates, renews, and transforms our life of faith. – *The Book of Common Worship*, 2018

Prelude

Aaron Copland wrote *Fanfare for the Common Man* for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. It was premiered on 12 March 1943 and was written in response to the US entry into the Second World War. The title was inspired in part by a famous 1942 speech where vice president Henry A. Wallace proclaimed the dawning of the “Century of the Common Man.” Over time it has become associated with events of national significance.

Processional Hymn

Lift High the Cross - George W. Kitchin (1827-1912) wrote the original version of this text (with twelve stanzas!) in 1887 for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The hymn was first used at a festival service in 1887 at Winchester Cathedral, England, where Kitchin was the Dean.

Offertory Anthem

This arrangement of *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* by composer Dan Forrest was commissioned by The Congregation at Duke University Chapel, Durham, North Carolina, in honor of Dr. Rodney Wynkoop and his tenure as Director of Chapel Music at Duke Chapel (1989 – 2018). Completed in 2021, it was premiered virtually as it was still during the height of the pandemic. The video of the premiere is here:

<https://youtu.be/AYbbA5N1smA?si=jd3sMjdxijtFUxeW>

Recessional Hymn

Go to the World! – Sylvia Dunstan (1955-1993) wrote this text on short notice for the 1958 Convocation of Emmanuel College in Toronto, the largest theological school of the United Church of Canada. Alan Barthel, Professor of Church Music at the school, requested that the text should be on the theme of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20. The text is sung to the familiar tune SINE NOMINE, which often accompanies the hymn text *For All the Saints*.

Postlude

Louis Vierne (1870-1937), the famed blind organist of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, composed six symphonies for organ. The first symphony was composed in 1898-1899. Vierne referred to final movement of this symphony as his own personal *Marseillaise*. (The *Marseillaise* is the national anthem of France.) Vierne was appointed organist at Notre Dame in 1900 and would remain there until his death at the organ console while playing a concert on 2 June 1937.