



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)

16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

People have a hard time letting go of their suffering. Out of a fear of the unknown, they prefer suffering that is familiar. — *Thich Nhat Hanh*

PRELUDE

“Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 541”

Johann Sebastian Bach
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 (based on Psalm 146)

Jeff Fritz

Leader: Hear the call of God! Draw near and praise the Lord!
People: Praise God for the heavens and the earth and all that is in them!
Leader: Draw near and praise the Lord!
People: Praise God who feeds the hungry and uplifts the downtrodden!
Leader: Draw near and praise the Lord!
People: Praise God who opens our hearts and sets the captives free!
Leader: Draw near and praise the Lord!
People: God will reign forever! Praise the Lord!

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #463

“How Firm a Foundation”

FOUNDATION

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 (adapted from “The Presbyterian Outlook”)

Jeff Fritz

Leader: Perhaps we fear that if we admit the flaws of our lives, we will find ourselves too far away, unreachable by God’s grace. But no chasm is too wide for God. In the act of confession, we begin the work of reconciliation. Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our shortcomings.

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

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UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jeff Fritz

Almighty God, you call us to lives of service, but we confess that we ignore our neighbors in need. You call us to share our abundance, but we confess that we choose our own comfort over generosity to others. You call us to build community, but we confess that we are too often gatekeepers, letting in only the ones that make us comfortable. Forgive us, God. Hear our prayer.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Jeff Fritz

Leader: Friends, who is in a position to condemn? Christ reaches out with endless love and mercy.

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE #698 (3 times) "Take, O Take Me as I Am"

TAKE ME AS I AM

READING

A Reading from Thomas Merton (*New Seeds of Contemplation*)

Polly McQueen

To some, peace merely means the liberty to exploit other people without fear of retaliation... To others, peace means the freedom to rob others without interruption. To still others, it means the leisure to devour the goods of the earth without being compelled to interrupt their pleasures to feed those whom their greed is starving. And to practically everybody, peace simply means the absence of any physical violence that might cast a shadow over lives devoted to the satisfaction of their animal appetites for comfort and pleasure. So instead of loving what you think is peace, love [others] and love God above all. And instead of hating the people you think are warmakers, hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed but hate these things in yourself, not in another.

Leader: May God bless the hearing of these words.

People: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Amos 6:1a, 4-7 (*Inclusive Bible*)

Jeff Fritz

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

People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN #793

"O Christ, the Healer"

ERHALT UNS, HERR

SERMON

"Couch Potato Spirituality"

Rev. Dr. Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION & THE LORD'S PRAYER (in language or version closest to your heart) Polly McQueen

When prompted with the words, "God, in your mercy," please respond by saying, "Hear our prayer."

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

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.

OFFERING INVITATION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

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.



* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“The Word Was God”

Rosephanye Powell
text: John 1:1-3

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made that have been made. Nothing was made, God has not made.
All things were made by God.*

* 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
Polly McQueen

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:	Loving God, as we bring these gifts before you, we do so with gratitude, trusting in your grace that sustains us day by day. Shape us into faithful followers of Jesus, that our lives may share good news in every word and every deed. Amen.	

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #65

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

RHONDDA

*This hymn was tied with five other hymns as the number nine vote getter in our favorite hymns survey.
Read more about it in this week’s worship notes: <http://tiny.cc/elpcworshipnotes>.*

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

POSTLUDE

“Cwm Rhondda (Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah)”

Paul Manz
based on based Glory to God #65
Dr. Moore, organ



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: Sara Hackett
Jeff Fritz
Polly McQueen
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
Beadle: Liz Hopkins
Crucifer: Linda Davis
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, please contact Norma (412.441.3800 x211). The cost is \$250.

◆ 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*)

Journey Dance

Enjoy an evening of healthy, energizing, funky and divine dancing on the 3rd Friday of every month

3rd Friday of month, 7 to 8:30 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** in each pew.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* **TODAY after the 11 am sanctuary service in the Fellowship Room** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please see one of the pastors to attend, or contact Jen King for more info on future classes (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.

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.

Inquirers' Class

Attend an Inquirers' Class after today's 11 am service in the Fellowship Room to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided. Please see Pastor Michael Diaz after the service to attend.

Tower Tour

A tower tour will be held after today. Pre-registration was required. If you already registered, please gather in the Highland Lobby after the 11 am worship service to participate, allow 45-60 minutes for the tour, and wear closed-toe shoes.



MusikGarden – Sundays

MusikGarden is taught by Carmen Blanco for children age 2-5 and their parents/grownups from 10-10:45 am on Sundays. Families are welcome to check out the class by visiting in September. MusikGarden's *The Cycle of Seasons* class celebrates your child's growing independence and love of nature. Developed to build attention and self-expression, activities include singing, chanting, moving, focused listening, musical games, exploring musical instruments, creative movement, and storytelling in a supportive community of students and parents. Offered in conjunction with *Hope Academy*. Contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

Registration is Open for Hope Academy's Fall Term

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



Join Our New Justice League – Oct 1 to Nov 19

Youth in grades 3–6 and teen volunteers are invited to join our new *Justice League*! We will gather on Wednesdays, beginning Oct 1 through Nov 19 from 5–7 pm, to eat dinner, look at what Jesus taught about love and justice, do a service project, and have fun together! Please reach out to Sara Hackett for more info (SaraH@coh.net).

World Communion Sunday & International Tasting – Oct 5

On Sunday, Oct 5, the ELPC Board of Deacons will be hosting an *International Tasting* commemorating World Communion Sunday. Join us in the McKelvy Room after the 11 am Sanctuary worship service for a sample of global cuisine. There will be sign-up sheets at the Penn and Highland Ave doors for the congregation to indicate their donations representing their favorite ethnic dish. For more info, please see Deacons Linda Sanders or Peta Harrigan Cole, or email info@coh.net.

Please note the *Peace & Global Witness Offering* will be received at both worship services this day.

Cathedral Concerts Series Kicks Off 15th Season – Oct 12

The *Cathedral Concerts* series at ELPC has announced its slate of concerts for the 2025–2026. For more information on each concert, please visit tiny.cc/cathedral-concerts.



On Sunday, Oct 12 at 3 pm, Windfluence, a Pittsburgh-based professional woodwind quintet, will join organist Dr. Edward Alan Moore for a dazzling performance featuring the *Concerto for Organ and Wind Quintet* by Daniel Pinkham.

Full Inclusion Sunday – Oct 12

Join us for worship on Sunday, Oct 12 as we celebrate *Full Inclusion Sunday*. This cooperative effort is led by the Justice Committee, our LGBTQIA Ministry Team, and the Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee.

Connections Group Potluck – Oct 19

We invite you to celebrate the Connections 2025-26 season kick-off with an all-church potluck on Sunday, Oct 19 after the 11 am service in the Good Samaritan Room!

Connections events build bonds, forge friendships and create community which heals the disconnected, the fearful and the lost – including us – through monthly, small-group activities. Christ always had room at his table; so do we at ELPC!

Even if you've yet to register for a Connections group, we'd love to get to know you at the potluck. Please sign up using this link for planning purposes: <https://tinyurl.com/ConnectionsPotluckOct19>



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

Chuck and Jake, Gayle,
Heidi's sibling John,
John, Lisabeth's son Paul,
Michael,
Bob Forloines, Linda Lane,
Gary Marzolf, Jean McGuire,
Rev. Carol Noel Seaman,
and Donald Smith.

Condolences to the Woolheater family, friends of Carol Chontos, on the sudden passing of their daughter, Braelynn.

Committee Meeting This Week

Justice..... Today @ 12:00 pm
Everyone is welcome join this meeting in Room 211.

For info to join a meeting, contact Jen King (JenK@coh.net).

Joint Adult Sunday School: Impactful Advocacy – Oct 26

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee will make a presentation on how to make your advocacy meaningful and impactful at a joint Adult Sunday School Class on Oct 26 at 9:45 am in the Good Samaritan Room. We will start with the “basis” of what our church says, and discuss a few Bible verses. The speakers will define a framework, Advocacy 101, and it will include the current most effective tactics. There will be a speaker from a state organization that does considerable environmental advocacy.

We will conclude with an ELPC friend, and a long-time member of several climate action groups, who will share his issue related advocacy. There will be opportunities for Q and A, and a table of resources.

An activity such as letter writing is planned at the close of the class for those not attending the 11 am service.

Giving Our Deaths Away Retreat – Oct 31 to Nov 2

From Friday–Sunday, Oct 31–Nov 2, join us for a Spiritual Life retreat on Halloween, All Saints Day, and the Day of the Dead at the Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center in Pulaski, PA. Amid our normal retreat rhythms of solitude and community, silence and conversation, stillness and activity, we will explore our mortality, our hopes and fears surrounding death, and what our tradition(s) have to say about death and eternal communion we have with saints and ancestors. According to the Spanish mystic John of the Cross, we have three essential struggles in life: 1) To get our lives together, 2) To give our lives away, and 3) To give our deaths away. Join us as we sit with these questions, listen to God and ourselves, and explore this on retreat in community with one another.

RSVP to Norma by Sunday, Oct 19 (412.441.3800 x211). For cost info, visit tiny.cc/giving-our-deaths-away. Scholarships available; contact Pastor BJ (BJW@coh.net).

IN OUR COMMUNITY

Help Fund Eddie Willson's Journey to Malawi

In July 2019, ELPC member Dr. Eddie Willson took a group of youth to Malawi. In Dec 2019, he became the moderator for the Pittsburgh Presbytery's *International Partnership* between South Sudan, Malawi, and Pittsburgh. In March 2023, he again travelled there. He will travel with a small group to Malawi later this year to meet up with a delegation from South Sudan. Visit www.pghpip.org for *International Partnership* info. If you want to help Eddie with the trip cost, please visit <https://gofund.me/ca331808>.

Lobby Day for Climate Action – Sept 29

Penn Future and Conservation Voters Of PA have organized a *Lobby Day* in Harrisburg for climate action on Monday, Sept 29 from 8 am-5 pm. For more info, visit www.pennfuture.org/Event-Lobby-Day-Monday-September-29. Fred Kraybill is driving to Harrisburg on Sunday and has room for 2 additional passengers (fredkraybill@yahoo.com).

Worldwide Communion Unity Service – Oct 5

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus, the Metro Urban Institute and the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary invite you to a *Worldwide Communion Unity Service* at PTS on Sunday, Oct 5 at 3 pm.

Walk, Give, Change the World – Oct 12

This year's Pittsburgh East CROP Hunger Walk will be on Sunday, Oct 12. Ways to participate: visit <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/teams?event=pittsburghpa> to: 1) register as an individual, 2) sign up for the Waverly Presbyterian Church team; or 3) make a donation. 1.5 mile and 4-mile courses available.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

October 5

– Adults –

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

Journey with Scripture – Highland Room + Zoom

Facilitated by Rev. Henk Bossers

Seekers – Garth Overlook Room + Zoom

“Examining The Movement To Make Conversion Therapies Legal Nationwide” led by Jason Van Ness. Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom

A discussion of *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members

– Children –

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

Sunday, 28 September 2025 – Sixteenth 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

The *Prelude and Fugue in G Major*, BWV 541 shows the influence on Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) from Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). Composed in Weimar around 1715, this is one of the few works for which a “clean” copy of the manuscript exists. Bach’s son, Wilhelm Friedemann (1710-1784), used this copy in 1733 for an audition at St. Sophia’s Church in Dresden. He got the job!

Offertory Anthem

The Word Was God is one of composer Rosephanye Powell’s (b. 1962) most popular works. She says this of the piece:

“The text and the theme of the piece are introduced simply, beginning in unison and growing into homophony in the men’s voices. The simplicity represents the “nothingness” that existed before creation. The unison represents the oneness of God and Christ (who is the Word). The homophony represents the distinctness of God and Christ in their roles. All that existed was God and the Word (Christ). All of creation grew out of these two who are one.” The text is from John 1:1-3:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made that have been made. Nothing was made, God has not made.

All things were made by God.

Recessional Hymn

The Welsh hymn text *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* was written by William Williams (1717-1791) in 1745 and published 1762. Williams was born in Carmarthenshire, Wales. He grew up as in Independent and later as a Calvinist. Following a conversion experience, he pursued ordination in the Church in Wales. In 1744 he devoted himself to Methodism after having been accused of misdemeanors against the Church in England.

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah originally had six stanzas. In the text Williams uses imagery from the book of Exodus to evoke a sense of God’s guidance through life. Peter Williams (1722-1796), no relation to William Williams, translated several of the stanzas into English in 1771.

The text was paired with the familiar hymn tune CWM RHONDDA in the early 20th century. Composer John Hughes (1873-1932) was asked to write a new tune for an annual Cymanfa Ganu (singing festival) in in Hopkinstown, Pontrypridd, Wales in 1907. Here it was paired with the Welsh text *Wle’n Sefyll Rhwng y Myrtydd* (See him stand among the myrtles) by Ann Griffiths (1776-1805).

...continued on next page

Originally the tune was called RHONDDA, the name of the nearby river as well as the chapel where it was first sung. It was renamed CWM RHONDDA to avoid confusion with another tune of the same name. CWM RHONDDA (pronounced *coom HIRON-tha*) means “Rhondda valley.”

This hymn was tied with five other hymns as the number nine vote getter in our favorite hymns survey.

Postlude

Paul Manz (1919-2009) was a well-known composer of organ and choral music for the church. Manz long served the church as recitalist, composer, teacher, and leader in worship. He was Cantor Emeritus at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint Luke in Chicago, Illinois, as well as Cantor Emeritus of Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The festive setting of the hymn tune CWM RHONDDA heard during the postlude this morning is his best-known organ composition.