

Weekly Worship Schedule

Journey Worship Service
Sundays | 8:45 am

Sanctuary Worship Service
Sundays | 11 am

Taizé Prayer Service
Wednesdays | 7 pm

Please Welcome Pastor Sarah Robbins!

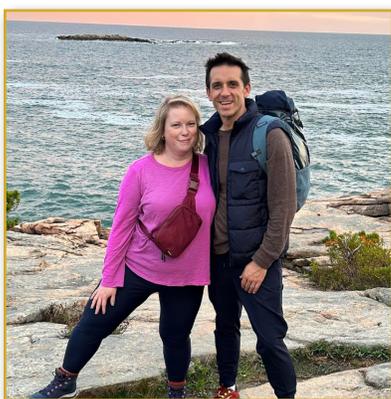


All are invited to a meet and greet reception for the Rev. Sarah Robbins, our new Associate Pastor, following Sanctuary worship on **Sunday, November 2**, in the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms. Refreshments will be served.

Pastor Sarah is no stranger to us; she has attended and preached at ELPC. We are so grateful that her spiritual journey has led to this new stage for both her and for our faith family.

Pastor Sarah has served several churches—including Dormont

Presbyterian, Wallace Memorial Presbyterian, and as Temporary Associate Pastor at Crossroads, as well as Interim Pastor at Glenshaw. Most recently, she served as the Interim Solo Pastor at Sixth Presbyterian Church here in Pittsburgh. Following that role, she served as Moderator and was on Commission on Ministry for Pittsburgh Presbytery. She now brings the lessons she's learned and experiences she has had to ELPC—and we are blessed to have her.



Pastor Sarah and her husband of more than 20 years, the Rev. Ben Robbins (Pastor of Northmont United Presbyterian Church in McCandless), have lived in the East End of Pittsburgh since moving back to the area in 2008. Their household includes their 9-year-old named Liam (they/them), who is a fourth grader, and Sarah's younger sister Anna Woomer (she/her). Anna works full time at Just Harvest, connecting folks to financial resources. Ben, Liam, and Anna look forward to participating at ELPC.

Pastor Sarah has always felt welcome at ELPC, but we now have the opportunity to individually welcome her to our exceptional Pastoral Team. We hope to see you at the meet and greet!

Session News

In October, Session approved the terms of call for Pastor Sarah Robbins. Elders also discussed ELPC's ministry goals in preparation for the 2026 annual budget.

Officer Nominations

The ELPC Officer Nominating Committee invites ELPC members to share their gifts—and to lift up the gifts of others—as the committee seeks nominees for the offices of Elder, Deacon, and next year's Nominating Committee.

The Committee will prayerfully consider all recommendations submitted by the congregation as they prepare a slate for terms starting in 2026.

Guidelines and nomination forms are available in the church mailroom and on the church website at tiny.cc/elpc-nominations. The submission deadline is **Sunday, December 1**.

Blue Christmas Service

The ELPC Board of Deacons invite you to our Blue Christmas service on **Friday, December 19**, 7 pm, in the Chapel. The service is designed as a source of strength during what is a difficult season for many.



East Liberty Presbyterian Church

www.ELPC.church

info@coh.net | 412.441.3800

Staff Leadership

Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff
MichaelD@coh.net | x223

Rev. Sarah Robbins

Covenant Pastor for Connection and Care
SarahR@coh.net | x221

Rev. BJ Woodworth

Covenant Pastor for Spiritual Life,
Taizé, and Transitional Ministries
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Wil Forrest

Coordinator of LGBTQIA+ Ministry
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Sara Hackett

Director of Christian Education
and Youth Ministries
SaraH@coh.net | x220

Anqwenique Kinsel

Director of Hope Academy
of Music and the Arts
AnqweniqueK@coh.net

Gerald McClendon

Mission Ministry Coordinator
GeraldM@coh.net | x238

Dr. Edward Alan Moore

Director of Music and Arts
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Jim Tinnemeyer

Director of Administration and Facilities
JimT@coh.net | x239

Rachelle Calfee

Bookkeeper
RachelleC@coh.net | x234

Jen King

Administrative Assistant to the Pastors
JenK@coh.net | x222

Norma Meyer

Administrative Assistant to Worship
& Music and Communications
Norma@coh.net | x211

Pastoral Message

The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz, Senior Pastor



“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else.” —1 Thessalonians 3:12

Friends,

November marks my one-year anniversary here in Pittsburgh as your Senior Pastor, and I am just as excited and energized today as I was then. Over the past year, we have witnessed God moving through this congregation in remarkable ways.

While it’s encouraging to share that worship attendance has risen by 30% and congregational giving by 15%, what moves me most are the stories behind those numbers. Week by week, people come through our doors seeking hope and belonging. Some are weary from the weight of the world while others are filled with gratitude for a community that loves them just as they are. Together, we’ve created sacred space where strangers become neighbors, where music lifts our spirits, and where God’s Word calls us toward compassion and justice.

Because of you, neighbors in need have found meals, shelter, and care. Families are deepening their faith in a God who welcomes every generation and identity. People from many faith journeys have found healing from the wounds of exclusion and a spiritual home where they can imagine a new future as a follower of Jesus. With Pastor Sarah Robbins now joining our pastoral team, I believe God’s love will continue to overflow through ELPC in powerful and surprising ways.

This month, as we prepare our 2026 ministry goals and budget, you’ll be invited to participate in our **Grounded & Growing Stewardship Campaign**. What amount is God calling you to pledge? How might your generosity become part of the story God is writing through East Liberty Presbyterian Church?

Each pledge is more than a number. Each pledge is a statement of faith in what God can do through us. Thank you for being grounded in Christ’s love. May we keep growing together into the church God is calling us to be.

Inquirers’ Class: New Date and Time

Interested in learning more about what God is doing at ELPC? Maybe you’re feeling the nudge to become an official member or friend of the church? The next Inquirer’s Class will be on **Saturday, November 8**, 10 am–12 pm. Lunch will be provided.

Please register at tiny.cc/Inquirers.

Support the Holiday Giving Tree

It's that time of year again for the Deacons annual Giving Tree Ministry. This is an excellent opportunity to assist families this Christmas season and provide children with gifts!



ELPC members, you have always been extremely generous supporting this important ministry. Sign up at tiny.cc/elpc-giving-tree for specific gift requests and to make financial donations to assist with the purchase of retail gift cards.

Gift requests will be available by November 14 as applications are received. Monetary donations can be made online at ELPC.church/donate, and be sure to include "For Giving Tree" in the notation.

Deacons will be available to assist and answer questions on **Sundays, November 16, 23, 30 & December 7**. Gifts should be dropped off at the church no later than **Sunday, December 7**.

Hope Academy is Back for Its 26th Season

We're thrilled to begin another inspiring year at Hope Academy—our 26th season of creating, learning, and growing together through the arts! It's a joy to welcome new families, staff, and teaching artists to our vibrant community.

This year, **Anqwenique Kinsel** returns as Director of Hope Academy, and we're excited to introduce **Minnie Jones** as our new Program Assistant. Joining our exceptional team of teaching artists are **Tiana Ozolins**, **Ava Rieger**, and **Grace Wellmon** from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre; **Carmen Blanco**, leading the Sunday *Musikgarten* class; and **Akinlana Lowman**, teaching *Youth Capoeira*.



Our students are off to a fantastic start in both dance and music! It's wonderful to see dancers advancing in their classes, building confidence and technique. We continue to provide ballet and jazz shoes, tights, and leotards for students who need them—and we are so grateful to the parents who donate gently used items so more children can participate fully.

Music students are settling beautifully into their lessons and ensembles. New and returning students alike are benefiting from the Hope Academy Instrument Library, which helps ensure that every child has access to an instrument.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our incredible partners who make our programs accessible, unique, and full of opportunity. This year's partners include **Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre**, **Chamber Music Pittsburgh**, **Guardians of Sound**, **Unisound**, **Resonance Works**, **Shana Simmons Dance**, and the **Capoeira Association of Pittsburgh**. Their generosity provides free classes, instruments, concert tickets, and special experiences that enrich our students' learning.

Last Call to Join Our Connections Groups

We still have open slots for our new season of Connections Groups! We meet monthly from fall–summer. Each group's 10–12 households sponsor events, such as home potlucks, restaurant meals, concerts, hikes, movies, or other activities.

Based on Jesus' call for radical hospitality, each group is open to ELPC members, families, friends, and others who visit or participate in ELPC events. Christ welcomed all to his community; ELPC does the same with Connections. We also created a "behavioral covenant" to foster a warm, safe, and respectful experience for all at events.

Visit tiny.cc/connections-potluck to join a group!

Young Adult Happy Hour Continues

Our next Young Adult Happy Hour takes place on **Monday, November 17**, 6–7:30 pm, at Barbara Griffin's home in Squirrel Hill. Stop by for appetizers and drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are available). And plan on joining us on the third Monday of every month!

Details and RSVPs via evite. Contact Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net for more information.

Our Young Adult Ministry welcomes all adults post-high school through their 20s and 30s. We are a community of students, professionals, married, single, partnered, with or without children—and from different races, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, backgrounds, and with varied beliefs. We join together to seek to better understand, to worship, and to serve the Holy. ALL people and questions are welcome. Seriously!

Christian Education

Sunday School for Children and Tweens

Children and tweens are invited to *Sunday School: Sacred Stories* after the Moments with our Children (11:10 am) during Sanctuary worship. Parents pick up their kids after worship.

Using the *Godly Play* curriculum, kids age 4–third grade will hear, see, touch, and retell the sacred stories of our faith, while asking “I wonder ...” questions and responding with art.

Tweens in grades 4–6 are working through a New Testament survey course, and dig into Bible stories through games, conversations, crafts, drama, and teamwork to discover what these stories mean to them in today’s world.

Children, birth through age 3, hear stories of God’s love, play, and sing songs in the Nursery, which is open during our Sunday worship services and Adult Church School classes.

Sunday School for Teens

Teens in grades 7–12 meet for Sunday School on the first and third Sundays of each month, 9:45–10:45 am, in the Second Floor Parlor.



Journey with Scripture | Highland Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Henk Bossers and other class members | SaraH@coh.net

Join us to read together various Scripture readings, whether from the lectionary or our pastor’s choosing. These readings span across the entire Bible. The class uses a variety of methods of engaging the Scripture texts and is conversational in nature. Prior knowledge of the Scriptures is not necessary for participation.

Seekers | Garth Overlook Room & Zoom

Facilitator: Gwen Puza | gpuza9@gmail.com

November 2: The President of Foreman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan

Dr. Jonathan Addleton, Rector/President of Forman Christian College University, a unique institution that breaks stereotypes about Pakistan, Muslim-Christian relations, interfaith harmony, and Christian institutions of higher learning. Foreman has 10,000+ faculty, staff and students.

November 9: Dr. Diona Jones, President and CEO of East End Cooperative Ministry

Dr. Diona Jones, President and CEO of East End Cooperative Ministry, will share her experience of the growing need for EECM’s services in Pittsburgh’s East End—especially during these times of rising economic instability and funding shifts.

November 16: Giving Our Deaths Away Discussion Led by Pastor BJ

How we approach death and dying leaves a legacy, a particular spirit, which either nurtures or haunts those left behind. If we die at peace with ourselves, loved ones, the world, and with God, then like Jesus, we will leave behind a spirit which nourishes, warms, consoles, and gives our loved one’s sacred permission to be at peace. How do we do that?

November 23: Embracing Partnership with Malawi & Avoiding Colonialism

ELPC has been a part of the International Partnership through the Pittsburgh Presbytery since 1993. Our sister Church is Balaka CCAP, in Balaka, Malawi. Dr. Eddie Willson will discuss his most recent trip to Malawi and the successes and challenges of this partnership over the years.

November 30: The Dor Hadash Reconstructionist Congregation & J Street

Learn about the Reconstructionist movement, the progressive Jewish denomination. It is the smallest and youngest of the American Jewish denominations. Nancy Levine is a longtime member of Pittsburgh’s Reconstructionist Congregation, Dor Hadash.

Also, Ronnie Cook Zuhlke will be with us with an update on J Street, the organization that promotes democratic values for peace for Israel, and for a homeland for the Palestinian people.

Soul Food | Good Samaritan Room & Zoom

Facilitators: Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members | hajdu625@comcast.net

November 2 & 9: So You Want to Talk About Race

We will continue discussing *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. This book discussion will pause following these two Sundays.

November 16, 23, & 30: Season’s Greetings

We will spend time discussing *Season’s Greetings* by Ruth Boling, our book for Advent and Christmas.

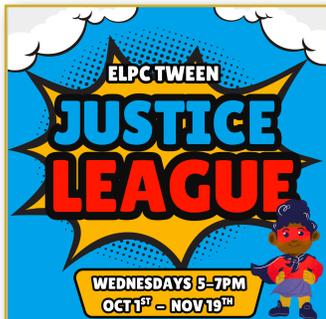
Children & Youth Ministry

Sara Hackett, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Youth Group

Together with youth in grades 7–12 from Sixth Presbyterian Church, we gather together on Thursdays, 4:30–7 pm, to share dinner, pray, play, and explore faith through service projects, arts and crafts, conversations, silly games, and whatever else we dream up!

Register online at ELPC.church. We will meet at Sixth Presbyterian Church on November 20. There will be no Youth Group on November 27.



Join Our New Justice League

Youth in grades 3–6 and teen volunteers are invited to join our new Justice League! We will gather on **Wednesdays through November 19**, 5–7 pm. Each week, we will eat dinner, look at what Jesus taught about love and justice, do a service project, and HAVE FUN! For more information or to RSVP email Sara Hackett.

For more information or to RSVP, reach out to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

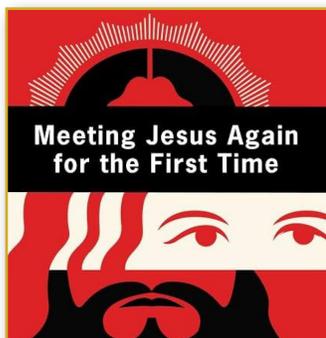
Parents, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* meets at the same time as Justice League. See the article below for details. You might want to participate in this class or Cathedral Yoga, 6–7 pm, while your kids are at Justice League.

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time

What if you could encounter Jesus with fresh eyes—free from assumptions, clichés, or familiarity?

This fall, join Pastors BJ and Michael on **Wednesdays through November 19**, 5:30–7 pm, for a four-week journey utilizing Marcus Borg's influential book, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*. Together, we'll explore Jesus as:

- **Spirit Person** | A man deeply connected to the sacred
- **Teacher of Wisdom** | Offering timeless guidance for life today
- **Social Prophet** | Challenging systems of injustice
- **Movement Founder** | Inspiring a community of transformation



Each session will blend teaching, scripture, conversation, and spiritual practices, creating space not just to learn about Jesus, but to experience his presence anew.

We'll share dinner together at 6:30 pm, and you're warmly invited to stay for our contemplative Taizé prayer service at 7 pm. Come curious. Come hungry. Come ready to meet Jesus again—for the first time!

To register, visit tiny.cc/meeting-jesus-again.

Winter Youth Retreat

Youth in grades 7–12 are invited to our Winter Youth Retreat at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center in Slippery Rock, **December 5–7**. We'll join together with youth from churches around Pittsburgh for energetic worship, thoughtful small groups, and lots of camp fun! The cost for the weekend is \$125 and full and partial scholarships are available. Registration and additional details are on the church calendar.

Children & Families

Open Gym with Coffee & Donuts

Parents and kids are welcome to hang out, drink coffee or juice, eat a donut, and play in the Gym on **Sunday, November 2**, 9:45–10:45 am.

We meet on the first Sunday of every month. If you want to meet other families or just love basketball or scooters, this is for you! This time also is perfect for parents of older teens (grades 7–12) who have Sunday School at the same time.

Family Art Making

Families with children and teens are invited to stay after Sanctuary worship on **Sunday, November 16**, to eat Chipotle and be creative together through a variety of art activities—including making cards to be handed out at the Chapel Market dinner in December.

Please RSVP to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

The Children and Families Ministry team hosts monthly family events to foster a caring community of families at ELPC, where kids and adults feel loved and empowered to explore their faith. RSVPs are appreciated, but not required.

Mission Board Message Board | November 2025

“As you did it unto the least of these, you did it unto me.”—Matthew 25:40

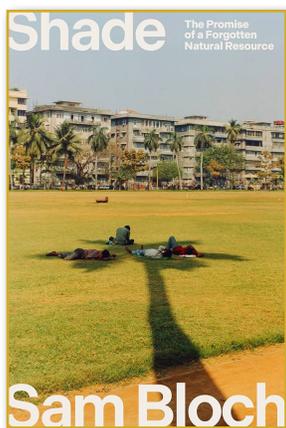
The **Neighbors Committee** invites you to participate in a Food Drive for East End Cooperative Ministry’s Food Pantry with non-perishable foods to distribute to those in our community who are in need. On **Sunday, November 16**, bring your food donations to worship. You also can drop off your donations in the Highland Lobby prior to November 16. Suggested items include: brown rice, whole grain pastas, instant potatoes, boxed mac and cheese, low-sodium soups and broth, low-sugar canned fruits and vegetables, canned tomato paste and sauce, canned tuna, high-fiber breakfast cereals, pancake mix and syrup, brownie mix, peanut butter, jelly, baking soda, bags of dried beans, and unsalted nuts and seeds.

Amen to ACTION

The Neighbors Committee also reminds you that **Amen to Action** is coming up on **Saturday, November 15**, 8 am–12 pm, at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. ELPC will join with more than 250 other neighbors from across 10 local congregations and nonprofits to pack 100,000 meals. As in previous years, we will be working in teams to package dry mix (soup or macaroni) meals to be delivered to our neighbors in need across Allegheny County by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Register online at tiny.cc/amen-to-action.

For details, email Bob Forloines at rforloines@gmail.com.

The **Environmental Team** of the **Justice Committee** invites you to its next book study, coming in January 2026. The Environment Team has selected *Shade: the Promise of a Forgotten Natural Resource* by Sam Bloch.



Environmental journalist Bloch encourages us to look to the past for solutions to our ever-warming urban areas as climate change creates heat waves that are more frequent, hotter and longer lasting. Bloch’s call for more shade in urban areas, with more trees in parks and residential areas and new ways to design public areas and buildings, comes as policymakers grapple with a growing crisis in heat-related illness and death. Heatwaves are now the country’s deadliest

natural disasters with victims concentrated in poorer, less shady areas. He draws examples from history, city planning, and social policy to change the way we think about a critical natural resource that should be available to all.

Shade was once a staple of human civilization. So what happened in the U.S.? The arrival of air conditioning and the dominance of cars took away the impetus to enshrine shade into our rapidly growing cities. *Shade* examines the key role that shade plays not only in protecting human health and enhancing urban life, but also looks toward the ways that innovative architects, city leaders, and climate entrepreneurs are looking to revive it to protect vulnerable people—and maybe even save the planet.

Questions/comments for discussion: Is shade a human right? Some say shade now is a privilege.

For further information and the zoom link, contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net.

This book will introduce a series of programs, activities, and advocacy that the Environmental Team will present in 2026, called *A Just Tree Canopy*.

The **Facing Systemic Racism Committee** reminds you that November is **Indigenous Peoples Month!** Look for a variety of programming, especially through ELPC’s **Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee**, throughout November.

Finally, both the **Peace** and **Justice Committees** draw your attention to a variety of peaceful community actions in which you can participate, advocating for a more just and equitable society. Reach out to anyone on the Mission Board for information on gatherings in your area.

In particular, people from many faith communities in our area—including ELPC—are joining in a **Prayer Vigil** on Fridays, 8–9:30 am, in front of the ICE offices on the South Side at 3000 Sidney St. Together, we pray, sing, share thoughts and stories, and observe times of silence. This is a peaceful event, hosted by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Pax Christi, and Casa San José; and promoted by the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network, to help remind the public of injustice being committed against our neighbors and to hold space for all of God’s children.

Please note that there is no civil disobedience, and the Pittsburgh Police are aware of the intention of these weekly, peaceful gatherings.



Presbyterian Women Bible Study

Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ: Jesus is Tested

Monday, November 3 7–8:30 pm (Online only)

Tuesday, November 4 10 am–12 pm (Hybrid)



Jesus may be the best role model for resilience and endurance because he knew his identity and understood his calling to stand up to and call out the forces of evil. This month, we will discuss Jesus' temptation in the wilderness following his baptism (Luke 4:1–13). At the end of this account, the devil departs "until an opportune time." Although people—and even demons—seem to know who Jesus is, his identity is questioned throughout his ministry, through his trial and crucifixion.

Tuesday morning bible study will meet online and in the Fellowship Room. The in-person study will be followed by a potluck lunch. Please bring a dish to share; beverages will be provided.

Email PW.ELPC@gmail.com for more information and the Zoom link.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry

Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQ Ministry

Our Next Spiritual Gathering

Please join us at our next Spiritual Gathering on **Sunday, November 9**, 12:30 pm, to share conversation and lunch. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks alike welcomed.

Questions? Please contact Wil Forrest at wil@coh.net or **412.441.3800 x218**. A Zoom option will be offered only if expressed need is shared with Wil prior to the Friday before the gathering.



God Created You. God Loves You. Be Yourself.

Health Ministry Seeks New Members

The ELPC Board of Deacons is looking to restart its Health Ministry. Anyone who might be interested (Deacon or non-Deacon) in exploring potential new activities for this ministry is invited to an initial meeting on **Sunday, November 16**, 12:30 pm, in the Highland Room.

Please RSVP to Tom Sturgill at sturgillpgh@yahoo.com.

ELPC People

If you have news to share, contact Jen King at JenK@coh.net or 412.441.3800 x222.

Thanks

Please join us in welcoming our new members and friends, who joined our faith family on October 12:

- Members: Greg Barlow, Scott Bell, Shawn Breit, Joe Brell, Sophia Kautz, Gary Marzolf, Alan & Tammy Murdock, Maralyn Smith, and David Swatzler
- Friends: Shawn Forrester and Sig Tragard

Thanks

The Board of Deacons would like to thank the members of the congregation, the Peace Committee, the Membership and Outreach Committee, Presbyterian Women, and Reva Modern Indian Cuisine for their contributions to our Taste of Nations International Lunch on October 5. Your generosity helped us make the event a success.

Prayers

We offer our prayers of comfort to the family and friends of those who recently passed away.

- Rev. Carol Noel Seaman, who passed away in September.
- Ryan Booher's grandmother, who passed away on October 20

“...inviting all to join our diverse, inclusive family of faith, transcending boundaries of race, class, ability, culture, age, gender and sexual identity to become one in Christ.”

Building Closures

The ELPC building will be closed on **Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11**, as well as for **Thanksgiving** on **Thursday–Friday, November 27–28**.

Hope Academy Teaching Artists to Perform at ELPC

The *Cathedral Concerts* series at ELPC continues on **Sunday, November 16**, 3 pm, with a performance by Hope Academy Teaching Artists, under the direction of Anqwenique Kinsel.

The concert is free and open to all. Invite your family and friends! A freewill offering will be received.

For more information on this season’s slate of concerts, visit tiny.cc/cathedral-concerts.



We’re Having a Pie Festival

The Spiritual Life Committee invites you to our fourth annual **ELPC Fall Pie Festival** following Sanctuary worship on **Sunday, November 23**, in the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms.



Bring your favorite fall pie (sweet or savory) to share with our congregation! Please join us for a time of celebrating the fall harvest and anticipation of the arrival of the holiday seasons.

Let us know what type of pie you’d like to bring by completing the online form at tiny.cc/pie-festival or by contacting Norma Meyer at **412.441.3800 x211**. Sign-up sheets also are available on Sundays.

Hanging of the Greens

After our Pie Festival on **Sunday, November 23**, join us in the Sanctuary for our annual Hanging of the Greens to get our church ready for the Advent season!