



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)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOVEMBER 30, 2025 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

This is what the prophets did. They created hope by drawing these divinely inspired images. And because the images are coming from God, there can be hope; we can find motivation and renewed energy to not give up in our fights. — *Rev. Isaac Munther*

PRELUDE

“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645”

Johann Sebastian Bach
based on Glory to God #349
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

Rev. Sarah Robbins & 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!

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Jeffrey, Jennifer, Westley, and Everson Kopanic

Leader: The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

People: Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. The element of the story we focus on changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, and how we experience it.

Leader: Close your eyes for a moment and imagine the journey of Mary and Joseph. How do they look? They are unaware that their unborn child will catch onto the prophets’ visions and challenge the world to usher in justice, peace, and transformation. What are they dreaming of for their child? What looks are they getting from those nearby?

Leader: Open your eyes. We know the world is not always an easy place to welcome new life. And yet, babies are born every day, and new families are formed.

Leader: What must those moments have been like for Mary and Joseph searching for a place to be? Now, just like then, exhausted expectant parents, far from home, are searching for safe spaces to settle. What must that be like for displaced families today?

Leader: Now, just like then, faithful families trust that somehow, each seemingly impossible situation will work out.

Leader: Mary and Joseph held on to hope when their options seemed to be in short supply. It was a hope that things would get better.

People: We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.

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

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #82 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” HYFRYDOL

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.*

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Presentation of Alexandra Noah, Jennifer Noah, and Bruno Stelitano

In response to:.....encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be faithful members of the church?

People: We do! We celebrate you as God’s beloved. We promise to pray with you, to listen and learn with you, to cultivate the gifts within you, to journey with you in times of joy and challenge, and to join you in God’s work of love and liberation. Together, we are the body of Christ!

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.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Wil Forrest

Leader: Heeding Jesus’ call to keep awake, let us be humble and bold in confessing the truth of the brokenness in our hearts, our actions, and our systems. Let us pray:

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Wil Forrest

God of hope, we confess that we too often seek salvation from that which will not save us. We cling to our own comfort, rather than being generous with our gifts and privilege. We are complicit in systems that benefit us, rather than challenging the exploitation of neighbors and creation. We act from fear rather than faith. Transform our hearts with your mercy. Forgive us and renew us. Make us restless for justice. Teach us again to be people of courage and hope. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

Wil Forrest

Leader: Heaven and earth may pass away, but God’s faithfulness is sure.

People: You are forgiven and forever claimed as beloved of God, through the saving love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE #92 (*verse 1 only, sing 2 times*)

WAITING

“While We Are Waiting, Come”

READING

Excerpt from “A Non-Traditional Blessing” attributed to Sr. Ruth Fox

Wil Forrest

May God bless you with discomfort, at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart. May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, abuse, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, equality and peace. May God bless you with tears, to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy...

Leader: May God bless the truth in these words.

People: Amen.

***HYMN #378**

“We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom”

MERLE’S TUNE

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 2:1-5 (*Inclusive Bible*)

Rev. Robbins

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Sunday, 30 November 2025 – First Sunday of Advent

The beginning of Advent also marks the beginning of a new liturgical year in the church calendar. Our liturgical calendar is organized into three yearly cycles, labelled A, B, and C. Today is the beginning of year A. <https://pcusa.org/theology-and-worship/advent>

Advent means *coming* or *arrival*. During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ's return.

Prelude

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) well-known arrangement of *Sleepers, Wake!* is from the *Schübler Chorales*, a set of six chorale preludes written a few years before his death. It is an arrangement of the tenor aria in his Cantata 140.

Offertory Anthem

Hymnwriter Susan Palo Cherwien (b. 1953) wrote this text in 1996 and Carl Schalk (1929-2021) set it to music with the hymn tune LUCENT, referencing the end of verse 2: "O lucent Morning Star."

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn

Music: Carl Schalk

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien

As the dark awaits the dawn so we await your light.
O Star of promise, scatter night, loving bright, loving bright,
till shades of fear are gone.

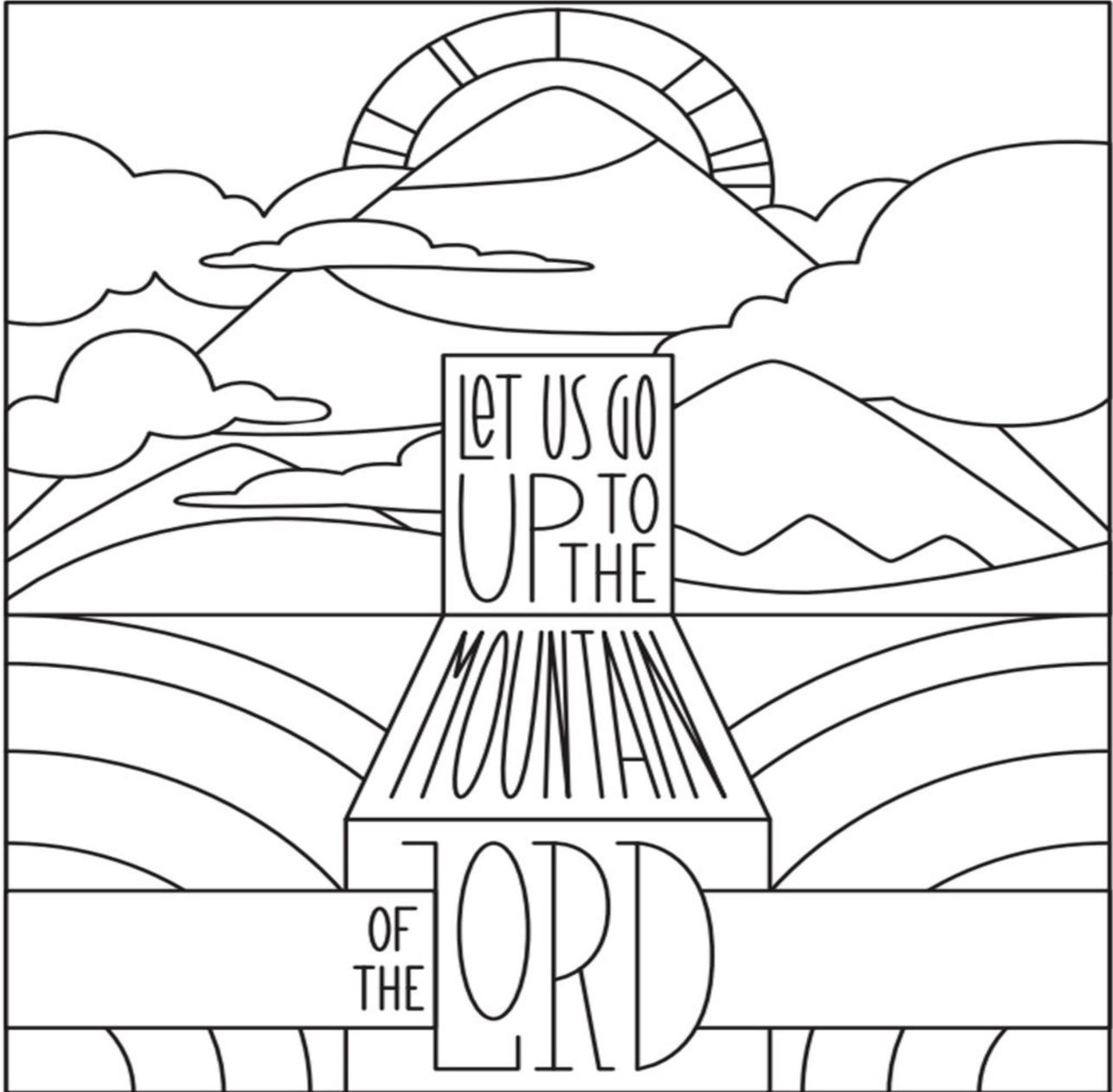
As the blue expectant hour before the silvering skies,
we long to see your day arise, whole and wise, whole and wise,
O lucent Morning Star.

As the moon reflects the sun until the night's decrease,
may we your healing light release, living peace, living peace,
unto your holy dawn.

Shine your future on this place, enlighten every guest,
that through us stream our holiness, bright and blest, bright and blest;
come dawn, O Sun of grace.

Postlude

Wayne L. Wold's (b. 1954) festive setting of *Sleeper's Wake* provides a more contemporary contrast to the setting by Bach heard during the prelude this morning. This is the third, and final, movement in a suite based on the tune *Wachet auf*. Wold was college organist at Hood College in Frederick, MD until 2020.



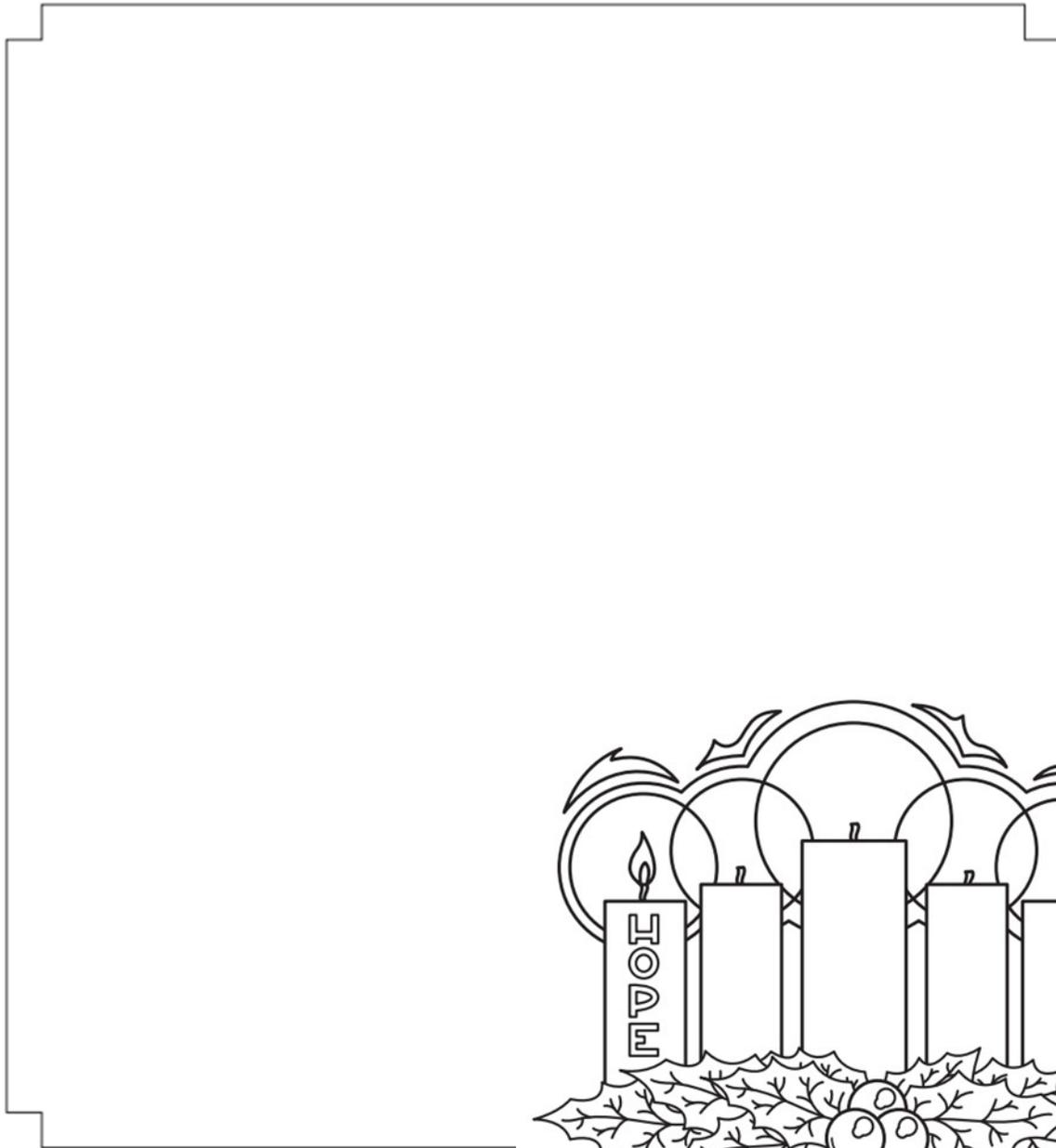
WORDS TO CARRY

Write down three words from worship you will carry with you this week.

DOODLE DRAW

The prophet Isaiah describes the future house of God as he sees it—a house on the highest of mountains, raised above the hills, where all people come to visit. Everyone will come to the house of God so God may teach them and they may walk in God's paths. The house of God will be a place where weapons are turned into farming equipment. All this will take place so all may walk in the light of the Lord!

With a partner, draw your future house of God! You can start with the ideas the prophet Isaiah gives us, or draw your own ideas of what this house would look like. Who would be there? What would be happening? What would it look like?



TODAY AT ELPC

Welcome Visitors!

If you are joining us for the first time, we're glad you are here! Please fill out a **NEW HERE** card found in the pew backs and give that card to a pastor at the Penn Ave or Highland Ave entrance. You will receive a gift in exchange for your filled out card. Our pastors will reach out to you for any prayer requests and to answer any questions.

Support the Holiday Giving Tree

The Deacons' annual *Giving Tree* ministry is an opportunity to assist families this Christmas season and provide children with gifts! Sign up at tiny.cc/elpc-giving-tree (or scan this QR code) for specific gift requests and to make financial donations to assist with the purchase of retail gift cards. Deacons will be available in the Highland Lobby to help you after worship today, and next Sunday. Gifts and donations should be dropped off by Sunday, Dec 7.



Advent Devotional Materials Now Available

Pick up your Advent devotional *The Will to Dream* in the Narthex or the Highland Lobby. The weekly readings, reflections, and coloring pages connect and build with each week's worship. Families with kids can pick up an Advent Calendar Bag that contains all the supplies you'll need for easy ways to dream together as you practice *Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love* this Advent season.



Officer Nominating Forms Due tomorrow!

The Officer Nominating Committee invites members to share their gifts—and to lift up the gifts of others—as they seek nominees for the offices of Elder, Deacon, and next year's Nominating Committee. Guidelines and nomination forms are in the church mail room, and on our website.

Chapel Market Needs Winter Coats and Toiletry Items

The Chapel Market is stocking up on winter clothes for our neighbors in need. From now until Thanksgiving, please consider donating clean, new or gently-used winter coats for toddlers to adults. They also need full-sized toiletry items. Leave donations in the Highland lobby.

PW Bible Study – Dec 1 and 2

Presbyterian Women's bible study will meet on Monday, Dec 1 from 7-8:30 pm (online), and on Tuesday, Dec 2 from 10 am-Noon (hybrid) in the Fellowship Room. Tuesday's 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 info and the Zoom link.

Tween Event - Gift Making- Sat, Dec 13th 1:00-3:00pm

3rd-6th graders are invited to come and make a variety of Christmas Gifts you can give to your family and neighbors.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry Spiritual Gathering – Dec 14

All are invited to the next monthly spiritual gathering of the LGBTQIA+ Ministry at 12:30 pm on Sunday, Dec 14 for conversation and lunch. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks welcome! Contact Wil Forrest, LGBTQIA+ Ministry Coordinator, to attend (Wil@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x218).

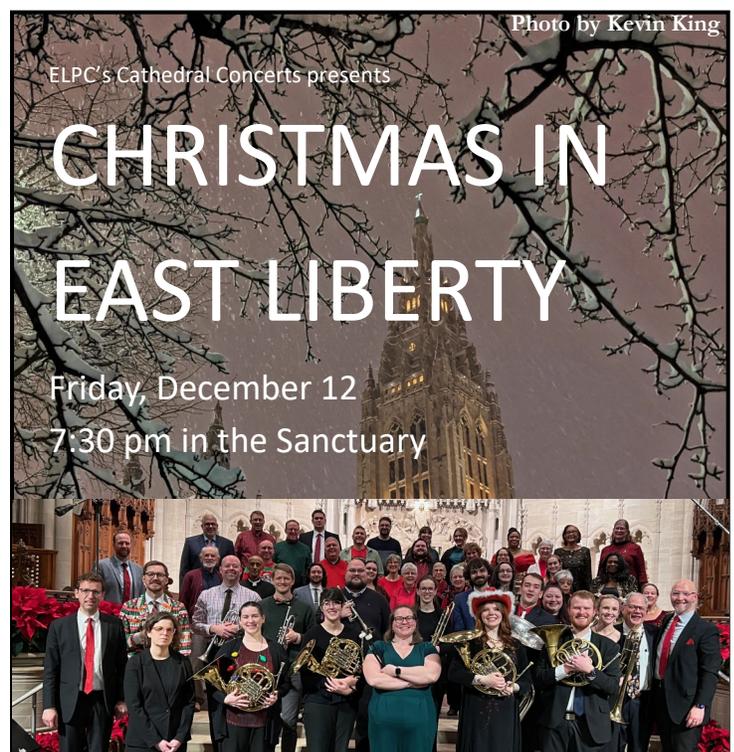
Cathedral Concert Volunteers Needed

If you are able to help greet and usher at the *Cathedral Concerts* this season, contact Dr. Ed (EdM@coh.net).

Young Adult Happy Hour- Monday, December 15th Young Adult Happy Hour continues at Andrea Devries home in Highland Park from 6:00-7:30pm Stop by for appetizers and drinks (both alcoholic and non) Details and RSVP to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

Christmas Pageant – kids needed to help tell the story!

Join us for a special re-telling of the Christmas story on Sunday, December 21 as part of the Sanctuary Service at 11am. We're looking for actors, sheep, stars, narrators, musicians, and set designers! Email SaraH@coh.net. There will be a dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 20, 9:30 am.





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

- Amber, David, an elderly neighbor,
- Lola, Mark and Sarah and Hunter and Ben,
- Rachel, Danice and Ayla, Ned's aunts Lynda and Judy,
- Sam, Vivienne's friend Ashley,
- Jeff Andrews, Loren Forrest, Cathie Hajdu,
- Chuck Lukehart, Gwen M., Rhonda Perroz,
- Jack Phillips, Janet Pollard,
- Grace Taylor, and Nancy Wright.

Condolences to **LaVerne Davis** on her mother's passing.
 Condolences to **Tim Engelhardt** on his grandfather's passing.

Committee Meetings This Week

FSR.....Tuesday, Dec 2 @ 6:00 pm
Property.....Tuesday, Dec 2 @ 7:00pm
 For info to join a meeting, contact Jen King (JenK@cob.net).
 412.441.3800 x222).

2026 Stewardship Update As of November 26, we have received 143 pledges totaling \$515,,169 Help us reach our goal of 226 pledges totaling \$700,000 by making your pledge today. (www.ELPC.church/pledge)



In our

COMMUNITY



Pittsburgh Pride Choir Holiday Concert – Dec 6

Join Pittsburgh Pride Choir for an evening filled with soaring holiday songs, festive dancing, and just the right touch of tinsel at their holiday concert, *A Not So Silent Night*. More than 120 voices strong, the Pittsburgh Pride Choir brings the magic of the season to life on Saturday, Dec 6 at 7:30 pm in the ELPC Sanctuary. You can also share in the celebration through a live-streaming option. Visit www.pittsburghpridechoir.org for tickets and info.

Amnesty International Write-a-thon – Dec 10

Join the Pittsburgh Chapter of Amnesty International for our annual *Write-a-thon and Human Rights Festival* on Wednesday, Dec 10 from 6-8:30 pm at Rodef Shalom (4905 Fifth Ave, 15213). There will be letter writing, information about Pittsburgh human rights groups, and a moving candlelight ceremony. Come for the whole evening or 5 minutes. Light refreshments will be provided.

Help Your Neighbors During Tax Season!

Low/moderate income taxpayers can receive free tax preparation at Free Tax Prep sites throughout the Pittsburgh area. You can help our neighbors receive vital refund money by becoming a free tax prep volunteer. We provide extensive training and tax preparation software. Join ELPC member Lynne Chadwick at the Homewood YMCA or volunteer at one of the other 20+ sites in the area. To sign up for shifts and training, go to <https://tinyurl.com/FreeTaxPrep-JustHarvest>. Contact Lynne with questions (LynneNChadwick@gmail.com).

If you make less than approximately \$50,000 per year (individual) or \$70,000 (family), you are eligible to have your taxes prepared for free. Call 211 in January to schedule a slot to have your taxes prepared.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

For Dec 7

– 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

The plight of Christians in Syria and in other parts of the Middle East. Guest speaker Dalel Khalil
 Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom

A continuing discussion of *Season's Greetings — Christmas Letters From Those Who Were There*, by Ruth Boling. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and others.

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. Sarah Robbins (she/they)
- Liturgists: Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz (he/him/él)
Rev. BJ Woodworth (he/him)
Sara Hackett (she/her)
Wil Forrest (he/him/his)
The Kopanic family
- Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
- Beadle: Polly McQueen
- Crucifer: Jason Van Ness
- Sound: Tim Benedict
Wayne Gaines

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

With the flowers today, we welcome Rev. Sarah Robbins.

◆ 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 building is open

◆ 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.

If you're a first time visitor, please fill out a **NEW HERE** card found in the pew backs and give that card to a pastor at the Penn Ave or Highland Ave entrance to receive a gift in exchange for your filled out card. Our pastors will reach out to you for any prayer requests and to answer any questions you might have.

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 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.