



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)

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

JANUARY 4, 2026 — 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

“What are you doing, O Magi? Do you adore a little Babe, in a wretched hovel, wrapped in miserable rags? Can this Child be truly God? ... Are you become foolish, O Wise Humans ... Yes, these Wise Humans have become fools that they may be wise.”

- Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

PRELUDE

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”
“Prelude for the Introit of Epiphany”

arr. Wayne L. Wold
Maurice Duruflé

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!

CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING

Pam Kimmel

One: Jesus is born!

All: Immanuel! God is with us!

One: The world is different, but not everyone knows this yet. The magi suspect, but they do not yet know. Wise people today wonder how things can be different. The empire seems so strong. Children continue to be vulnerable, and oppressive regimes exist. And yet, there is also a courageous defiance.

All: Joy that bubbles up when it would seem impossible. Kindness and generosity from those who have little to nothing. The magi, like us, are dreaming of a different world.

One: A world where all children are able to remain securely with their families, where leaders care more about the people they lead than the position they possess.

All: A world where all basic needs are met, including food, housing, health care, and education.

One: The dream is for the world to be as it is in heaven. A place where every person is valued, just as they are, and our systems reflect the best of caring for one another.

All: Immanuel, God-with-us, thank you for being present as we keep the journey before us. Amen.

(The Christ candle is lit.)

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #152

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

“What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright”

Continued on next page...

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

Jan 4 • Epiphany Sunday

*Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Sara Hackett

*Children of any age are welcome to come forward for Moments with our Children, then remain in worship afterwards.
Children age 3 and younger can play in the nursery from 8:30 am-12:30 pm.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Pam Kimmel

Leader: Answering God's call, let us confess our sins and recommit ourselves to God's pathways of righteousness.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: God of refuge, we confess that we are captive to the political and economic realities that cause neighbors to live in uncertainty and fear. We are slow to show hospitality to the immigrant and reluctant to risk our privilege for the sake of advocacy. Grant us humility and courage and stir up in us a renewed commitment to holy resistance, for the sake of those seeking refuge. We pray in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pam Kimmel

Leader: Friends, God promises to always be with us.

All: In Christ, we are forgiven and renewed. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE # 151 v.5 "We Three Kings of Orient Are"

KINGS OF ORIENT

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-9 (*Inclusive Bible*)

Rev. Woodworth

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:10-15 (*Inclusive Bible*)

Rev. Sarah Robbins

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

People: Thanks be to God.

* **HYMN # 137**

"He Came Down"

HE CAME DOWN

SERMON

"Follow the Star, Not the Script"

Rev. Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

SHARING GOD'S PEACE

Rev. Diaz, Rev. Robbins

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

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.



Rev. Woodworth

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Christmas Joy"

Mark Schweizer
text from a poem by Howard Thurman

* **DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607**

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Christ, all creatures here below.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore. Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

*Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

-THE LORD’S SUPPER-

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Rev. Robbins

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Rev. Robbins, 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 up 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 language/ version closest to your heart)*

Rev. Diaz

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

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Rev. Robbins, Rev. Woodworth

SHARING BREAD & CUP

Rev. Diaz

At ELPC, we practice an open communion table. You need not be a member of this church or any church to participate. No matter what you believe or doubt, you are welcome.

As the ushers direct you forward, please come by the center aisle to the communion servers, cup your hands one on top of the other to receive the bread, and then pick up a cup of grape juice. After partaking of the elements, you may place your empty cup in the baskets as you return to your seat by the side aisles. Those seated in the East Transept (near the Highland Entrance) will be directed by an usher to the center walkway and will join the line behind those in the back section. Those who are unable to come forward will be served in their seats; please raise your hand and tell the usher or make eye contact with a roaming communion server.

Communion elements are gluten-free bread and grape juice. If you need an allergy-free wafer, please visit the center communion station(s).

COMMUNION HYMNS

#128

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

W ŻŁOBIE ŁĘŻY

#129

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming

ES IST EIN’ ROS’

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING *(in unison)*

Rev. Woodworth

Creator of all good things, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of blessing, small in their presentation, yet magnificent in our holy imagination. May Christ accompany us on our journey ahead. Amen.

* **RECESSIONAL HYMN** *(see insert)*

DIX

“As with Gladness Those of Old”

* **BENEDICTION**

Rev. Diaz

POSTLUDE

“In Dir ist Freude, BWV 615 ”
(In You is Gladness)

Johann Sebastian Bach



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)
Rev. Sarah Robbins (she/they)
Sara Hackett (she/her)
Pam Kimmel
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
Beadle: Heather Eng & Polly McQueen
Crucifer: Mario Seneca
Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

♦ WORSHIP FLOWERS

Please contact Mario Seneca if you would like to purchase flowers for our worship service in honor or memory of a loved one (seneca459@hotmail.com) or sign up at tiny.cc/SundayFlowers

♦ SUNDAY WORSHIP

There will be no 8:45 Journey service next Sunday Jan 11.

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

♦ 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* **Sunday, Feb 1 after**

the 11 am worship service to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please sign up at elpc.church/visit-us/becoming-a-member, or contact Jen King, administrative assistant to the pastors (JenK@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x222).

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

Sunday, 4 January 2026 – Second Sunday of Christmas/Epiphany

The word “epiphany” (from the Greek *epiphaneia* or *theophaneia*) means “appearance” or “manifestation” of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

<https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/epiphany>

Prelude

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) was a meticulous composer, constantly revising his music, which resulted in a smaller output of compositions than many of his contemporaries. This perfectionism resulted in pieces of the highest quality, which are held in high regard in the organ literature. His shortest composition for the organ, this prelude was composed in 1962 and is based on the Gregorian plainsong sung at the introit on Epiphany.

Offertory Anthem

Christmas Joy is based on the poem *The Work of Christmas* by Howard Thurman. The Reverend Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was a prominent religious leader in the social justice and civil rights movements. He served as dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University from 1932-1944 and as dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University from 1953-1965.

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/now-the-work-of-christmas-begins/>

Postlude

This jubilant setting of *In You is Gladness* is found in the “New Year” section in Bach’s *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book), a collection of 46 chorale preludes. Bach’s original plan was to include 164 chorale preludes in this collection spanning the liturgical year. The chorales in this collection were composed between 1708-1714, when Bach was living and working in Weimar, Germany.

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.

LGBTQIA+ Ministry Spiritual Gathering – Jan 4

Today at 12:30 pm. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks welcome! Contact Wil Forrest, LGBTQIA+ Ministry Coordinator, to attend (Wil@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x218).

Help Needed after worship

The Worship, Music & Arts committee is asking congregation members to assist in putting away the Christmas decorations after church please.

Cody Conley & Friends Cathedral Concert – Jan 4

The *Cathedral Concerts* series at ELPC continues today at 3 pm with a performance by Cody Conley on violin, Devin Arrington on violin, and Grace Burns on piano, featuring a new violin duo composed by Devin Arrington for Cody and Devin. The concert is free and open to all. Invite your family and friends! A freewill offering will be received. For more details, visit tiny.cc/cathedral-concerts.



PW Bible Study – Jan 5 and 6

Presbyterian Women's bible study will meet on Monday, Jan 5 from 7-8:30 pm (online only), and on Tuesday, Jan 6 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 Bowling– Fri Jan 9- 5:30-7:30pm

Kids in grades 4–6 are invited to an evening of pizza and bowling in ELPC's duck pin bowling lanes. Friends are always welcome. Please RSVP to Sara Hackett, SaraH@coh.net

Faith In Action – Advocacy Coaching – Jan 12 and 14

We learned at the October Adult Education presentation on Impactful Advocacy that individualized calls and emails to legislators are more impactful than form letters and emails. To facilitate such advocacy, the Environmental Team of the Justice Committee will offer two identical one hour information sessions on Zoom on Monday, Jan 12 at 7 pm, and Wednesday, Jan 14 at 10 am. During these sessions, you will receive examples, tips, and resources. Think in advance about an issue or cause that is important to you. We will practice on a common issue. You can also request the recording link to the October presentation.

Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) to register and receive the Zoom link for one of the January information sessions, or to request a link to the recording of the October presentation.

Sunday School for Teens – Jan 18

Teens will meet on Sunday, Jan 18 from 9:45–10:45 am in the 2nd floor Parlor.

Variety Show at Ivy Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

on Sunday, January 18! Families are invited to eat lunch and coordinate tasks here at ELPC after worship in the First Floor Fellowship Room. We will leave ELPC at 1:15 pm to head over to Ivy Park to set up and welcome residents (you can ride in the church van or drive on your own). Come with a musical performance, joke, magic trick, story, art piece, dance or whatever you dream up to share with the residents! Please RSVP to Sara Hackett at SaraH@coh.net.

PRAY ALWAYS IN ALL WAYS



ELPC Spiritual Pathways

Have you ever wondered what prayer is or if you even believe in prayer? Have you ever longed to pray more but struggled to know how? Together we will talk about our struggles and hopes with prayer and explore a wide variety of prayer forms, including body prayer, prayer beads, icons, silence, written fixed-hour prayer and prayer as simple awareness in life. It will be playful, inspiring, interactive with lots of time to practice together.

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

*Wednesdays, Jan 21, 28, Feb 4 and 11
at ELPC from 5:30-7 pm*

Register online at
[https://tinyurl.com/
PrayAlwaysClasses2026](https://tinyurl.com/PrayAlwaysClasses2026)

WEEKEND RETREAT

*Fri, Jan 23 at 6 pm to Sun, Jan 25 at 11 am
at Villa Maria Retreat Center*

Register online by Jan 11 at
[https://tinyurl.com/
PrayAlwaysRetreat2026](https://tinyurl.com/PrayAlwaysRetreat2026)



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

Regina Anderson, Linda Benedict, Syden D.'s niece and mom, Mary E., James G., Cathie Hajdu, Kate Lindholm's cousin Michael, Polly M's friend Justine, Marti Moore, Jon Nelson's cousin Rayna and aunt Helen, John N's wife Nancy L, Rhonda Perroz, Linda S., David S., Jeff W's friends Nichole and Jen; Cheryl; and Finn.

Condolences to:

Jon Nelson *on his cousin's passing.*
Michele Bossers' sister Nedra *on the loss of her husband.*
Joe Harris *on the loss of his daughter Crystal*

Committee Meetings This Week

Facing Systemic Racism.....Tuesday, Jan 6 @ 6:00 pm
Mission Board.....Thurs, Jan 8 @ 5:30 pm
For info to join a meeting, contact Jen King (JenK@coh.net).

Young Adult Happy Hour – Jan 19

Young Adults (in their 20s, 30s and 40s) are invited to the *Young Adult Happy Hour* at the home of Russell Ludwig on Monday, Jan 19 from 6-7:30 pm. Stop by for appetizers and drinks (both alcoholic and non). For details and to RSVP, contact Sara (Sarah@coh.net).

Environmental Team's New Book Study – Jan 22

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee is reading *Shade: the Promise of a Forgotten Natural Resource* by Sam Bloch. Read along and join us for a discussion on Thursday, Jan 22 at 7 pm on Zoom. In his new book, environmental journalist Sam 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 policy makers grapple with a growing crisis in heat-related illness and death. Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) for Zoom.



INQUIRERS CLASS
Sunday, Feb 1
after 11 am worship

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* on Sunday, Feb 1 after the 11 am Sanctuary worship service in the McKelvy Room.

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 see one of the Pastors.



In our

COMMUNITY



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).

Please Support

Hope Academy of Music & the Arts



Hope Academy of Music and the Arts, an after-school and Saturday arts ministry of ELPC, provides high-quality music and dance education to students ages 3-19. *Please scan this QR code and make a donation today to invest in the creative future of the youth in our community.*



Active Intruder Safety Training – Feb 7

All ELPC friends, members, leaders and staff are welcome to attend an important training session on Saturday, Feb 7 from 1-4 pm to learn about how to remain safe if an intruder enters the building. ELPC's Safety and Security Advisory Committee will be hosting a local safety officer who will share helpful information and answer our questions. Please pre-register by Jan 31 at tiny.cc/safety-training or by calling Jen King at 412.441.3800 x222.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Resumes Jan 11

– 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

“Marcus Borg on Jesus in the 1st and the 21st Centuries.” Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom

Continuing discussion of *Season's Greetings* by Ruth Boling, our book for Advent and Christmas. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members