



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)

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

JANUARY 11, 2026 • 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

The question is not “How am I to know God?” but “How am I to let myself be known by God?”
The question is not “How am I to love God?” but “How am I to let myself be loved by God?”

— Henri Nouwen

PRELUDE

“Schönster Herr Jesu (Beautiful Savior)”

Gerre Hancock

Tune: Glory to God #630

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!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rebecca Reiner

Leader: When we pass through the cleansing waters of baptism and the troubled waters of our lives,
God declares:

People: I will be with you.

Leader: When we go through the fires that refine us and the fires that threaten our livelihoods, God declares:

People: I will be with you.

Leader: Even when we travel to the far corners of the earth or down into the depths of our souls,
God declares:

People: I will be with you.

Leader: So come, let us worship God whose love never fails, whose presence never leaves, whose mercies never end.

People: Praise be to God! Amen.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #408

“There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT

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

Rev. Woodworth

Leader: We belong to God. Nothing can break this covenant. Let us, then, with confidence approach God to honestly confess our sins in prayer.

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

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UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Woodworth

God, you call us to beloved community with you and with each other. But we exclude and reject those we deem different. You claim us as beloved, but we turn against each other in anger and hate. Redeeming God, forgive our worldly ways. Call us and claim us once again for the work of building your beloved community. Amen.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Rev. Woodworth

Leader: Friends, God's covenant is eternal.

People: In Christ, we are redeemed and made new. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE #480 (vs. 1 and 4 only)

TAKE ME TO THE WATER

"Take Me to the Water"

READING

from "The Book of Awakening" by Mark Nepo

Rev. Robbins

The cormorant and common murre are sea birds that dive half-blind looking for food. As they go from surface to bottom, air bubbles get caught in their feathers, and this makes them shine. Thus, as they dive, they turn silver. So too, we; for don't our bubbles of pain get trapped in our feathers, turning to jewels the closer we get to the current under everything? This is a baptism of true feeling: the deeper we go, the slower the world; the slower the world, the softer our way. So we must keep calling each other into the depths of what we know. For below the surface, we all shine. Diving in, we all turn silver. Given to air alone, the cuts of this world burn. But when we dare to enter what is deep, the bruises we carry soften and glow. In truth, the more we accept our limitations and surrender to the depths below our woundedness, the more the vastness holds us up. There is no way to know this but to dive.

Leader: May God bless the truth in these words.

People: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 3:13-17 (Inclusive Bible)

Rebecca Reiner

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. John tried to dissuade Jesus, saying, "I should be baptized by you, and yet you come to me!" But Jesus replied, "Leave it this way for now. We must do this to completely fulfill God's justice." So John reluctantly agreed. Immediately after Jesus had been baptized and was coming up out of the water, the sky suddenly opened up and Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and hovering over him. With that, a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Own, my Beloved, on whom my favor rests."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

* **HYMN #163**

"Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice"

ABERYSTWYTH

SERMON

"Called to the Deep, Invited to Dive In"

Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Rev. Dr. Diaz, Rev. Robbins, Rev. Woodworth

Leader: Beloved people of God, through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power of sin was broken. Let us celebrate our freedom and redemption through the renewal of the promises made at our baptism. Trusting in the mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

People: I do.

Leader: Do you turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, trusting in Christ's grace and love?

People: I do.

Leader: Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his word and showing his love?

People: I will, with God's help.

Leader: Will you devote yourself to the church's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers?

People: I will, with God's help.

* Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

(Water is poured)
Leader: You, O God, are the voice above the waters, showering wisdom and grace.
People: We praise you.
Leader: You sent Jesus to give us living water – the cup of blessing, the cup of promise, the cup of salvation.
People: We give you thanks.
Leader: Now send your Spirit to make this water a pool of healing, a river of new life, a flood of grace.
People: We glorify you.
Leader: Keep us one in the way and the truth and the life of Christ Jesus.
People: Amen.

HYMNS

During the hymns, all baptized individuals are invited to proceed to one of the baptismal fonts (as you feel led). A pastor will then bless you while making the sign of the cross on your forehead. If you are not baptized but would like to receive a blessing, cross your arms across your chest as you come forward. If you are not baptized and feeling led by the Holy Spirit to be baptized, please email Jen King to schedule a date (JenK@cob.net).

#482 “Baptized in Water” BUNESSAN
#492 (sing multiple times) “You Belong to Christ” YOU BELONG TO CHRIST

THE LORD’S PRAYER (in language/version closest to your heart) Rev. Robbins

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

SHARING GOD’S PEACE

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes. Rev. Robbins, Rev. Woodworth
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. Dr. Diaz

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day” arr. Richard Shepherd
Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance to see the legend of my play, to call my true love to my dance. Sing O my love, this have I done for my true love. Then was I born of a virgin pure, of her I took fleshly substance. Thus was I knit to all of nature, to call my true love to the dance. In a manger laid and wrapped I was, so very poor; this was my chance, betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass, to call my true love to my dance. Then afterwards baptized I was; the Holy Ghost on me did glance, my Creator’s voice heard from above, to call my true love to my dance.

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607

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

OLD HUNDREDTH

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Loving God, we give you thanks and praise for the many ways your Spirit moves through us.
Receive the gifts and offerings we now share. May we ever live as your beloved children, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev. Robbins

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #618

“O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High”

DIO GRACIAS

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

* POSTLUDE

“Deo Gracias”

Aaron David Miller

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. Sarah Robbins (she/they)
Rev. BJ Woodworth (he/him)
Sara Hackett (she/her)
Rebecca Reiner
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
Beadle: Laura Ristau
Crucifer: Tim Engelhardt
Sound: Tim Benedict and 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 visit tiny.cc/SundayFlowers, or call Norma (412.441.3800 x211). The cost is \$260. Reserve your date at least one week before the Sunday you wish to sponsor the flowers.

◆ SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:45 am.....**Journey Worship (resumes Jan 18, and moves to Chapel).** 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

◆ 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.

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* on **Sunday, Feb 1 after the 11 am service** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please sign up online at elpc.church/visitus/becoming-a-member, or contact Jen King (JenK@coh.net).

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

Sunday, 11 January 2026 – Baptism of the Lord

At this festival of the Christian year, we not only remember Jesus' baptism, but we celebrate our own: the baptism we share with Christ. Accordingly, this Sunday is an appropriate time to celebrate the sacrament of baptism or the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. It also foreshadows the season of Lent, as Jesus was immediately driven into the wilderness for 40 days after his own baptism.

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

Prelude

For over 30 years Dr. Gerre Edward Hancock (1934-2012) was Organist and Choirmaster at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, New York City. Dr. Ed Moore studied with him at the Eastman School of Music. The tune *Schönster Herr Jesu (Beautiful Savior)* is based on a Silesian folk song from the early 19th Century.

Processional Hymn

Doris Akers (1923-1995) was one of Black gospel's most prolific composers and was affectionally known as *Miss Gospel Music*. *Sweet, Sweet Spirit* is one of her most famous compositions and was published in 1962. Watch Doris Akers play and lead in the singing of this beloved song here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zJ8YeybpMQ>

Offertory Anthem

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day first appeared in *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* in 1833 but is believed to have originated much earlier. The verses of the hymn progress through Jesus' life as told in his own voice. His life is repeatedly characterized as a dance, something that was also later used in the hymn *Lord of the Dance*.

Postlude

Aaron David Miller (b. 1972) is Director of Music/Organist at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. The tune *Deo Gracias*, also known as "The Agincourt Song" is found three times in our *Glory to God* hymnal, #189, 258, 618.

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 you might have.*



Journey Service in the Chapel

The *Journey* service starts back at 8:45 am on Sunday, Jan 18 in a new location - the chapel! The chapel will allow us to have a space for children and a more intimate space to worship. Unfortunately, we will not be able to broadcast the service via Zoom or on social media just yet. Join us one Sunday!

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. Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) to register and receive the Zoom link, or to request the Oct recording.

Health Ministry Invites Members – Jan 18

The recently reformed *Deacon's Health Ministry* will meet on Sunday, Jan 18 at 12:30 pm in the Highland Room after worship. Those interested (*non-Deacons welcome!*) should RSVP to Tom Sturgill (sturgillpgh@yahoo.com).

Sunday School for Teens – Jan 18

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

ELPC Families are Hosting a Variety Show – Jan 18

Families with children and teens are hosting a *Variety Show* on Sunday, Jan 18 at Ivy Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Families are invited to eat lunch and coordinate tasks here at ELPC after worship in the Fellowship Room. We will leave ELPC at 1:15 pm to go to Ivy Park to set up and welcome residents (you can ride in the church van or drive on your own). There is a small parking lot at 5609 Fifth Ave, 15232, and street parking behind the building.

Come with a musical performance, joke, magic trick, story, art piece, dance or whatever you dream up to share with the residents! Sara will have some fun and easy things folks can help with if you forget your kazoo!

Please RSVP to Sara Hackett (SaraH@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 Hackett (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 calls for more shade in urban areas, with more trees in parks and residential areas and new ways to design public areas and buildings. Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) for Zoom info.

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 **TODAY** 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, Mary E, James G, Cathie Hajdu, Kathy K's neighbor David, Kate Lindholm's cousin Michael, Chuck Lukehart, Jennifer M's father Karle, Polly M's friend Justine, Chris Markwell, 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 Joe Harris on the loss of his daughter Crystal.

Committee Meetings This Week

Finance..... Tuesday, Jan 13 @ 5:30 pm
Deacons Tuesday, Jan 13 @ 7:00 pm
Worship, Music & Arts..... Tuesday, Jan 13 @ 7:30 pm
Membership & Outreach.....Thursday, Jan 15 @ 7:30 pm

Confirmation Retreat at ELPC – Jan 24

On Saturday, Jan 24 from 10 am–3 pm, our Confirmation Class for youth in grades 8–9 will explore the Bible through conversations, games, art projects, and more, asking questions like: *What's in the Bible?* Contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

Active Intruder Safety Training – Feb 7

ELPC's Safety and Security Advisory Committee invites all ELPC friends, members, leaders and staff to attend an important training session on Saturday, Feb 7 from 1-4 pm at ELPC concerning how to remain safe if an intruder enters the church building. There will be a local safety officer who will share helpful information and answer our questions. Please pre-register by Jan 31 at <https://forms.office.com/r/j6aTkreA1T>, or contact Jen King (412.441.3800 x222). The week before the event, we will send a reminder notice with the exact room location. We hope you can make it.



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



MLK East Liberty Celebration – Jan 19

On Monday, Jan 19 from 1–4 pm, join Pastor Michael and the Kelly Strayhorn Theater community in honoring the enduring vision of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., through *The Beloved Community*—a day of unity, reflection, and creative expression. This celebration includes local leaders, an art exhibition, and dynamic youth musical performances from community arts organizations. Tickets are available at www.kelly-strayhorn.org.

Flower Sponsorships Available for 2026

ELPC's Worship, Music and Arts Committee is excited to announce our new partnership with Jim Ludwig's Blumengarten Florist. Beginning this year, members and congregants will have the opportunity to sponsor customized floral arrangements for the chancel. For the price of \$260, individuals, groups, and families can sponsor two lush arrangements of fresh, seasonal flowers to memorialize or honor loved ones, celebrate special occasions, or mark liturgical milestones.



Sponsors will be recognized for their contributions in several ways—via social media posts; in the bulletin; on the slides that rotate prior to the Sanctuary service; and, with a special acknowledgement by the Pastor during that Sunday's *Welcome and Announcements*. Blumengarten was selected by WMA's Visual Enhancement Subcommittee after a thoughtful review of proposals and floral arrangements from local vendors.

Reserve your special Sunday online by visiting tiny.cc/SundayFlowers; or call Norma (412.441.3800 x211). Reserve your date AT LEAST one week before.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

January 18

— 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

“Michaelangelo's Faith Questioning During the Reformation” video. Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom

We will resume and continue our discussion of *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members