



# 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)*

## 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

FEBRUARY 22, 2026 • 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

**PRELUDE** “Little Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 553” attr. Johann Sebastian Bach  
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*

### WELCOME VIDEO

**CALL TO WORSHIP** Julie Millhouse

Leader: The good news of the gospel is: manna in the desert, water turned into wine,  
**People: love after loss, forgiveness after pain.**  
Leader: The good news of the gospel is: release for the captive, hope for the hopeless,  
**People: mourning turned to dancing, and strangers turned to friends.**  
Leader: So draw near. There’s no time to waste!  
**People: This surprising good news is here. Let us worship this good-news God.**

\* **PROCESSIONAL HYMN #318** “In Christ There Is No East or West” ST. PETER

**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.*

\* **HYMN #301 (verse 1)** “Let Us Build a House” TWO OAKS

**FIRST READING** from the Lenten Devotional by Rev. Lizzie McManus-Dail Rev. Sarah Robbins

Behold: Jesus’ debut act of ministry [in John’s gospel]. It’s not a healing, or an exorcism, or turning tables for justice. Jesus doesn’t have to begin with defeating evil because he knows ultimately evil doesn’t stand a chance... Evil doesn’t stand a chance against a God who is not only NOT afraid of scarcity, but laughs in the face of it. Evil doesn’t stand a chance against a God who will never let an empty cistern or full tomb have the final word. Evil is predictable. But our God loves a surprise because God knows the plot twist is the same every time: God’s goodness will overflow. Every single time.

Leader: May God bless the truth in these words.  
**People: Amen.**

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

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### LITANY FOR LENT

Rev. BJ Woodworth

Leader: Joy-giving God, somewhere along the way we learned that faith must be serious, especially during Lent. That holiness means quiet voices and careful steps.

**People: We thought devotion meant somber faces and steady composure.**

Leader: Forgive us for shrinking your joy and for doubting that delight is holy. We confess that we sometimes run out of patience, of hope, of compassion, of courage.

**People: The jars of our lives feel empty.**

Leader: We confess that we live in a world that feels drained by war and violence, by illness and grief, by anxiety and addiction, by injustice that refuses to loosen its grip.

**People: God, have mercy.**

Leader: We pray for those whose celebrations were interrupted this week.

**People: Be near to them.**

Leader: For those sitting in hospital rooms instead of banquet halls...

**People: Be their comfort.**

Leader: For those overwhelmed by depression or fear...

**People: Be their steady light.**

Leader: For communities longing for justice and peace...

**People: Pour out your transforming grace.**

Leader: When joy wears thin or hope runs dry, fill the empty jars.

**People: When we believe there is not enough, surprise us with grace.**

Leader: So take our doubts and our weariness. Take our small faith and trembling hope and renew us.

**People: We are forgiven and renewed. Amen.**

### SCRIPTURE READING

John 2:1-11 (*Inclusive Bible*)

Julie Millhouse

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

\* **HYMN** (*see music insert*)

“In a Neat and Tidy Garden”

ALL THE WAY

### SERMON

“The Good News is... So Good It Catches Us By Surprise”

Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz

### MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

### BLESSING OF NEW MEMBERS & FRIENDS

*Members:* Bruce Bancroft, Patricia Bancroft, Maura Bell, Cecelia Dagner, Nathaniel DelleFave, John Denny, Kelley Denny, Craig Jones, Sarah Jones, Ryan Kelley, Julie Kelley, Meghan Mack, Logan Newman, Laura Phillips, Amanda Potasnik, Niya Szymanski,

*Friends:* Katie Rossi

Leader: Do we, as East Liberty Presbyterian Church, welcome these new members and friends and affirm our shared calling to follow Christ together?

**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 LORD’S PRAYER (*in language/version closest to your heart*)

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

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

**SHARING GOD’S PEACE**

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **Y también contigo.**

**And also with you.**

**CHURCH NEWS & OFFERING INVITATION**

Rev. Dr. Diaz, Rev. Robbins

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](http://www.ELPC.church/donate).



**OFFERTORY ANTHEM**

“Good News!”

arr. Rosephanye Powell/William C. Powell

*Good news, chariot’s coming, don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*There’s a seat for me in the heavens, I know, don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*There’s a long white robe in the heavens, I know, don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*Better get on board and don’t you be late, don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*‘Cause the chariot’s coming from the heavenly gates, don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*Old Moses is leading and she won’t wait long. Don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*So get moving children when you hear this song. Don’t want them to leave me behind.*

*Good news, chariot’s coming, don’t want them to leave me behind.*

\* **DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607**

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all creatures here be - low;  
 praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more; praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore. A - men.

\* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Rev. Woodworth

Leader: Loving God, you call us to a holy journey during Lent. Take these simple, ordinary offerings and turn them into gifts of good news for our neighbors. Through Christ, we pray. Amen.

\* **RECESSIONAL HYMN #339**

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

LIFT EVERY VOICE

\* **RESPONSIVE CHARGE**

Rev. Dr. Diaz

Leader: As we leave this place, may we hold on to this good news:

People: **love and justice for all, joy that surprises, nonviolence that transforms.**

Leader: The gospel is alive in the world, so go and speak it. Live it.

People: **May we hold on to this good news.**

\* **SUNG BENEDICTION** *(see music insert)*

“Hold On”



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](http://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)  
Julie Millhouse  
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)  
*Director of Music and Arts*  
ELPC Chancel Choir  
Beadle: Liz Hopkins  
Crucifer: Linda Davis  
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](http://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 (now in the 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

**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

#### 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

#### ◆ 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, April 12 after the 11 am worship service** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided. Please contact Jen King ([JenK@coh.net](mailto:JenK@coh.net)) for more info.

Call the Church Office (412.441.3800), or visit the ELPC website at [www.ELPC.church](http://www.ELPC.church).

## Sunday, 22 February 2026 – First Sunday in Lent

This morning is the first Sunday of the season of Lent, a period of 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The six Sundays in Lent are not counted in the 40 days. To read more about the season of Lent:

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

### Prelude

The eight “little” preludes and fugues were previously thought to have been composed by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Recent research has labeled them as spurious, with some speculation that they may have been composed by Bach’s student, Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713-1780).

### Sermon Hymn

*In a Neat and Tiny Garden* is from our Lenten devotional materials, *Tell Me Something Good*. It is set to the familiar tune ALL THE WAY, originally written for Fanny Crosby’s hymn text *All the Way My Savior Leads Me*.

You may pick up printed copies of the Lenten Devotional, *Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News this Lent*, at the church. Devotionals reflect on the themes we are exploring in worship this Lent, including radical welcome; love of neighbor; and care of the vulnerable through art, scripture, music, readings, journal prompts, and poems. If you’d like an e-reader version:

<http://tiny.cc/elpc-devotional>

### Offertory Anthem

Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962) is one of America’s premiere women composers of choral music. Her research has focused on the African-American spiritual and the art songs of William Grant Still. Her husband, William C. Powell, revoices this SARB version of her *Good News!* that was originally written for SSAA voices. This version was commissioned by “The Spiritual for the New Millenium Project” at Penn State University.

### Recessional Hymn

*Lift Every Voice and Sing* – often called The Black National Anthem – was written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson. It was first performed in public in Johnson's hometown of Jacksonville, Florida as part of a celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday on February 12, 1900 by 500 schoolchildren at the segregated Stanton School, where James Weldon Johnson was principal. Johnson’s brother, John Rosamond Johnson, later set the poem to music. In 1919, the NAACP adopted and labeled the song as The Negro National Anthem.

### Benediction Response

*Hold On* has been sung at many of the demonstrations in Minneapolis recently and the song has spread across the country. Songwriter Heidi Wilson says:

“It is January 2026, and the people of Minneapolis are inspiring us with what it looks like to really take care of one another in the face of escalating ICE raids and authoritarian violence. They are walking kids to school, delivering food to neighbors, standing on street corners in rapid response. And they are singing. I am humbled and moved that this song is useful to folks right now.”

## 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.

### Lenten Devotional Materials Available

Pick up your Lenten devotionals, *Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News this Lent*, at ELPC.

Devotionals reflect on the themes we are exploring in Lent including radical welcome, love of neighbor and care of the vulnerable through art, scripture, music, readings, journal prompts and poems.

You can request an e-reader version online at:

<https://cathedralofhope.org/news/tell-me-something-good-lenten-devotionals-now-available/>

### Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual *Congregational Meeting* will take place today following our Sanctuary worship service in the Social Hall, and on Zoom. All official members of the church are invited to participate and vote for new candidates for Elder and Deacon for this coming year. Refreshments will be served. The annual report is available on the info tables around the church. To receive the Zoom link, please visit: <https://cathedralofhope.org/event/congregational-meeting/>



### Praying with Art for Families & Tweens – Wednesdays

On Wednesday evenings in Lent, from 5-7 pm, families and tweens are invited share dinner, make art, and explore different ways of praying this Lent. Activities will follow the themes in our Lenten worship and devotional series *Tell Me Something Good*. Families of any age are welcome to come and tweens in 3rd-6th grade can join with or without a parent. More details are on the church's online calendar. RSVP to Sara (SaraH@coh.net).

### Cathedral Concert – March 1

The *Cathedral Concerts* series at ELPC continues on Sunday, March 1 at 3 pm with a performance by ELPC soloists and choir with music of Stephen Sondheim. The concert is free and open to all. A freewill offering will be received. For more details, visit [tiny.cc/cathedral-concerts](http://tiny.cc/cathedral-concerts).



### Lenten Conversations:

#### Tell Me Something Good – Feb 25 through April 1

Feeling overwhelmed in life? Join Pastor Michael on Wednesday evenings from Feb 25 to April 1 in the Good Samaritan Room as we slow down and listen for a different kind of news. Each week from 5:30-7 pm, we'll gather for honest, hope-filled conversations rooted in Sunday's sermon and our series *Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News This Lent*. Together we'll explore Jesus' life through the scriptures and ask deeper questions about the text, the sermon, and what it means for us today. Whether you're curious, weary, skeptical, or hopeful, there's room for you. Our goal is not to give each other easy answers but to speak from our own perspective and experiences. A light dinner will be served at 6:30 pm. Please register online at:

[tiny.cc/tell-me-something-good](http://tiny.cc/tell-me-something-good)



### Step Into the Story of Nell and Poll Exhibit – During February

As we recognize Black History Month, ELPC's Facing Systemic Racism, Spiritual Life, and Worship, Music, and the Arts Committees invite you to a storywalk on the lives of Nell and Poll, members of a family enslaved and sold by two of our early founders. This unique self-guided experience in the Trustees Room will include six stations that trace significant milestones and moments in the lives of Nell and Poll.



Visitors moving through the storywalk will encounter powerful images paired with prayers, guided meditations, poetry, and reflections designed to deepen their understanding and spark contemplation. This is more than an exhibit—it's an opportunity to pause, pray, and engage with narratives that challenge and inspire.

After completing the walk, visitors will be prompted to share their impressions in a journal. Those thoughts and reflections will help us continue our congregational conversation about faith, art, and the work of dismantling systemic racism. Come and experience this sacred space of learning and reflection.

*The storywalk is available during February:*

**Tuesdays through Fridays from 9 am-8 pm**

**Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am-3 pm**

*NOTE: This exhibit is appropriate for older children, but please use your discretion for younger children.*





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

Ali, Dave, Nicole and family,  
 Andrea DeVries' mom Elaine, Joan Heckel,  
 Mark Held, Mike Hellman, Chris Markwell,  
 Henry and Lisa Petrilli, Jan Pressman's grandson, Liz Tafel.

*Condolences to **Peggy Hodge**  
 on the passing of her sister, Sue, and niece, Lynne.*

*Condolences to **Gail Mallory** on the passing of her friend, Kevin.*

**Committee Meetings This Week**

**Neighbors**..... Wednesday, Feb 25 @ 6:00 pm  
**Peace**..... Thursday, Feb 26 @ 5:30 pm

**PW Bible Study – March 2 and 3**

Presbyterian Women's bible study will meet on Monday, March 2 from 7-8:30 pm (online only), and on Tuesday, March 3 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 info and the Zoom link.

**Presbyterian Women's Winter Retreat – March 6 to 7**

The *Late Winter Retreat* at Crestfield Camp by Presbyterian Women from Friday, March 6 to Saturday, March 7 is currently full and cannot accept new registrations. If you have questions about your registration, please see Kay Shissler or Gretchen Chapman at today's annual meeting.

**Tree Equity Presentation – March 8**

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee is currently focusing on the issue of Tree Equity—ensuring that all communities have equal access and benefits from the presence of trees. Disadvantaged Pittsburgh neighborhoods have 20% fewer trees, which has serious implications for health outcomes.

The March 8 program, planned from 12:30–1:30 pm, will include an expert from Tree Pittsburgh and a speaker from the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, who will provide a faith and justice perspective. Light refreshments will be provided in the Fellowship Room.

Tree Pittsburgh and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will offer advice on tree maintenance, volunteer opportunities, how to get a tree for your yard, and more. See them and our Landscape Subcommittee in the Garth Overlook Room. Tree activities in underserved neighborhoods will be coming in the spring and fall. The program will also be available online. Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) for the zoom link.

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 (training and tax preparation software provided). 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.

**Donations for Chapel Market**



The Chapel Market needs:

- winter clothes
- diapers (sizes 5-7)
- full-sized toiletries items (soap, body wash, toothpaste, toilet paper, toothbrushes, lotion etc.)

Donations can be left at the Highland Lobby, or dropped off at the Chapel Market when open (on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 5–7 pm, or Thursdays from 10 am–12 pm).

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES**

**March 1**

– Adults –

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

**Journey with Scripture** – Highland Room + Zoom

A Lenten practice *Visio and Lectio Divina* with Pastor BJ and Rev. Bossers. 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

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