



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)

4TH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 15, 2026 • 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

PRELUDE

“Liebster Jesu, Wir Sind Hier”
(Blessed Jesus, We Are Here)

Max Reger
based on Glory to God #395
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*
arr. Douglas E. Wagner
ELPC Ringers

“O Sacred Head Now Wounded”
“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

WELCOME VIDEO

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jan and Frances Irvin

Leader: God loves the crows that take flight when church bells ring.
People: **God loves the baby, cooing in the back pew.**
Leader: God loves the child who rocks and claps.
People: **God loves the one with wrinkled hands and soft eyes.**
Leader: God loves the bumblebees and the tabby cats.
People: **God loves those who walk, crawl, and roll.**
Leader: God loves the giant oaks and the evergreens, standing strong over all of us.
People: **God loves the young, the impressionable, and the earnest.**
Leader: There is no bit of creation that God does not love.
People: **So let us worship this good-news God! Amen.**

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN (*see insert*) “See the Precious Children” BEACH SPRING

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 Helena Vesper Hobson (daughter of Mackenzie and Finn Hobson)

Leader: By word, deed, love, and prayer, do you as members of the church of Jesus Christ promise to guide and nurture Helena, encouraging her to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member 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.

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

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* **HYMN #301** (*verse 4*) "Let Us Build a House" TWO OAKS

SCRIPTURE READING Deuteronomy 24:17-22 (*Inclusive translation*) Jan Irvin
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.
People: Thanks be to God.

LITANY FOR LENT Rev. Sarah Robbins

Leader: The scriptures say, "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them."
People: Holy God, we confess we have mistreated immigrants in our land.
Leader: Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."
People: Merciful God, we confess we have clung to violence more than peace.
Leader: God said, "Leave the gleanings of your harvest for the stranger, the orphan, and the widow."
People: Generous God, we confess we have hoarded what you intended to share.
Leader: Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."
People: Compassionate God, we confess we have sometimes guarded your grace.
Leader: Yet you say, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you."
People: By your mercy we are forgiven and loved.
Leader: We pray for immigrants, for families in poverty, for those living in fear, and for all burdened by grief or illness or anxiety.
People: Draw near, O God.
Leader: Soften our hearts and make us instruments of your love.
People: Until all are seen and cared for, may this be our prayer. Amen.

HANDBELL ANTHEM "What Wondrous Love Is This" arr. Lloyd Larson

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 19:13-15 (*Inclusive translation*) Frances Irvin
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.
People: Thanks be to God.

HYMN #469 (*sing 3x; seated*) "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" CHILDREN PRAYING

SERMON "The Good News is Protection and Care for the Vulnerable" Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

INVITATION TO ANOINTING AND PRAYER Rev. BJ Woodworth

Are you in need of an affirmation that God is journeying with you? Do you desire for someone to pray alongside you? If so, please come forward, down the center aisle, as we sing. Volunteer prayer partners will be present to listen, intercede, anoint and hold you in God's love. You may also visit one of our prayer stations and light a candle in prayer at the entrance to the Trinity Chapel.

HYMN #486 "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise" KINGDOM
HYMN #471 "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" HEAR MY PRAYER

As you pray these simple prayers, trace your finger on this circle on in the palm of your hand, knowing God's presence surrounds what or who you are praying for.



God our Keeper, encircle
(*name/place*),
Keep protection near
and danger far

God of Courage, encircle
(*name/place*),
Keep hope within
and despair without

God of Light, encircle (*name/place*),
Keep light near
and darkness far

God of Comfort, encircle
(*name/place*),
Keep peace within
and anxiety without

Eternal Creator, Redeemer,
and Sustainer, shield
(*name/place*),
on every side

*Adapted from the
Celtic Book of Daily Prayer*

*Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

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

Rev. Woodworth

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

SHARING GOD'S PEACE

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.

CHURCH NEWS & OFFERING INVITATION

Rev. Dr. Diaz and Rev. Woodworth

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.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Prayer of the Children”

Kurt Bestor/Andrea S. Klouse

Can you hear the prayer of the children? On bended knee, in the shadow of an unknown room.

Empty eyes with no more tears to cry, turning heavenward toward the light.

Cryin' Jesus, help me to see the morning light-of one more day.

But if I should die before I wake, I pray my soul to take.

Can you feel the hearts of the children? Aching for home, for something of their very own.

Reaching hands, with nothing to hold on to, but hope for a better day a better day.

Cryin' who, help me to feel the love again in my own land.

But if unknown roads lead away from home, give me loving arms, away from harm.

Can you hear the voice of the children? Softly pleading for silence in a shattered world?

Angry guns preach a gospel full of hate, blood of the innocent on their hands

Cryin' Jesus, help me to feel the sun again upon my face,

For when darkness clears I know you're near, bringing peace again.

Dali cujete sve dječje molitve? (Croatian translation: Can you hear all the children's prayers?)

Can you hear the prayer of the children?

* **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.

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** *(in unison)*

Rev. Robbins

Loving God, in gratitude we offer these gifts. Use what is given to bring hope, healing, and justice into the world. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

* **RECESSIONAL HYMN #547**

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

AR HYDY NOS

* **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”

The worship service concludes after singing. There is no Postlude during Lent.



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
Jan and Frances Irvin
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
ELPC Ringers
Beadle: Jo Ellen Aleshire
Crucifer: Sonia Degenholtz
Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

The flowers today are given to the glory of God in joyful celebration of Helena's baptism, sponsored by Finn and Mackenzie Hobson.

Please see today's bulletin insert to sponsor an Easter plant, or to make a donation to the EECM food pantry.

◆ 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

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*)

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* 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 register at elpc.church/visit-us/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, 15 March 2026 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

This morning is the fourth Sunday in 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 ELPC Ringers rehearse weekly on Tuesdays at 6 PM in Dr. Ed's office. Handbells were first brought to the United States from England by Margaret Shurcliff in 1902. The ELPC Ringers's handbells are a 4-octave set of bells manufactured by the Schulmerich company from Hatfield, PA.

Processional Hymn

See the Precious Children is from our Lenten devotional materials, *Tell Me Something Good*. It is set to the familiar tune BEACH SPRING, a tune from *The Sacred Harp*, 1844. The tune is included with three different hymn texts in our *Glory to God Hymnal* at #490, 498, and 716.

Offertory Anthem

Kurt Bestor (b. 1958) was a missionary in Serbia during the 1970s. Here he witnessed the effects of war and bigotry had on the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian children. He wrote *Prayer of the Children* as a way of expressing how these innocent children might be feeling during this difficult period. Originally written for soloist with piano accompaniment, it was later arranged for chorus, as heard this morning. This choral arrangement has been sung following many national tragedies and school shootings. Bestor later dedicated the song to the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting in December 2012.

Recessional Hymn

The hymn text *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* was written by Jaroslav J. Vajda (1919-2008) in 1983. Vajda was made a Fellow of The Hymn Society at the Annual Conference of The Hymn Society in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in 1988. He was born in Lorain, Ohio, where his father was a Lutheran pastor. As a pastor himself, he served in many Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Churches, including in nearby Tarentum, PA from 1953-1963.

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. You can request an e-reader version online at:

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

Family Game Day with Happy Wanderers

After today's 11 am service, children and their families are meeting with ELPC's seniors community group *The Happy Wanderers* in the Fellowship Room for a special joint event for an afternoon of games. ELPC's Children & Youth will teach games from their youth to our seniors, and ELPC seniors will teach games from their youth to our communities' children. An allergy friendly lunch will be provided. All ages welcome.

Step Into the Story of Nell and Poll Exhibit

Please take some time to visit a unique, self-guided experience in the Trustees Room — a storywalk on the lives of Nell and Poll, members of a family enslaved and sold by two of our early founders. It has stations paired with prayers, guided meditations, poetry, and reflections.

The storywalk is available through Easter Sunday on:

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.



INQUIRERS' CLASS

**Sunday, April 12
after 11 am worship service**

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* on Sunday, April 12 after the 11am Sanctuary worship service.

Learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided.

Register online at: visit-elpc.church/visit-us/becoming-a-member, or contact Jen King (JenK@coh.net).

ELPC Communications Survey

ELPC's new Communications Team is asking for your feedback as we assess our current ELPC communication tools, identify any gaps, and make recommendations about how best to connect with people in the life of the church. Please complete a brief survey online by scanning this QR code, or by visiting: tiny.cc/elpc-communications.



Young Adult Happy Hour – March 16

On Monday, March 16, the Young Adult Happy Hour continues at Rev. Michael Diaz and Nino Testo's home. Happening on the 3rd Monday of every month from 6-7:30 pm, join us for appetizers and drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic). RSVP online for location details. Our Young Adult Ministry welcomes all adults post-high school through their 20s and 30s. ALL people and questions are welcome! RSVP at <https://invite.social/ipuhrmbkfgbrsprg>

SSA Training Rescheduled – March 21

All are invited to attend the RESCHEDULED training session on Saturday, March 21 from 1-4 pm in the McKelvy Room on how to remain safe if an intruder enters the church building, hosted by ELPC's Safety and Security Advisory Committee. Pre-register by March 15 at tiny.cc/safety-training, or call Jen King (412.441.3800 x222).

Social Hour – March 22

The Hope Academy staff and the Membership and Outreach Committee are hosting our social hour after 11am worship on March 22nd in the Fellowship Room. Please join us for light snacks, a time to meet someone new, and hear more about the amazing work that Hope Academy offers this community each week!

Lenten Conversations:

Tell Me Something Good – Wednesdays through April 1

Feeling overwhelmed in life? Join Pastor Michael on Wednesday evenings through 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. Register online at: tiny.cc/tell-me-something-good



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

Ali, Carlos, Jeff, Kim, Mike H, Nancy, Nicole and family, Theresa, Rebecca A, Diane M, Linda Benedict, Jan Herzer's friend Kim and friend Jeff, Pierena Morelli, Jan Pressman's grandson, and Liz Tafel.

*Condolences to the family of **Barbara Davis** on her passing. She was ELPC's former bookkeeper.*

*Condolences to **Rachelle Calfee** on the passing of her brother, Arnold.*

*Condolences to **Carol Chontos** on the passing of her friend.*

*Condolences to the family of **Wayne Younger** on his passing.*

Committee Meetings This Week

Deacons Health Ministry Today @ 12:30 pm
Session..... Tuesday, March 17 @ 7:00 pm
M&O..... Thursday, March 17 @ 6:00 pm

For info to join a meeting, contact Jen King (JenK@coh.net).

Praying with Art for Families & Tweens – Wednesdays

On Wednesday evenings in Lent from 5-7 pm, families and tweens are invited to 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. RSVP to Sara (SaraH@coh.net).

Upcoming Church Tours – March 22 and April 19

Tom Morton will lead a tour of the Sanctuary and Chapel on March 22. On Sunday, April 19, join our guides for a tour of the Tower. (*Pre-register at tiny.cc/towertour as this tour is limited to 20 participants.*) Please gather in the Highland Lobby after the 11 am Sanctuary worship service to join any of our tours.

Palm Sunday Processional – March 29

Kids (and parents too!) are invited to join our processional at the beginning of our 11 am service on Palm Sunday, March 29. Please meet in the Narthex around 10:50 am to get palm branches and instructions.

Wills & Healthcare Decisions Clinic – April 12

The ELPC Board of Deacons Health Ministry will sponsor a *Wills & Healthcare Decisions Clinic* presented by students from the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University to be held on Sunday, April 12 at 12:30 pm in the McKelvy Room. Any ELPC congregants with expertise in this type of law are welcome to participate and potentially be a resource to participants in the Clinic. To RSVP or with any questions, please contact Tom Sturgill (sturgillpgh@yahoo.com).

In our

COMMUNITY



Garfield Community Farm Native Plant Sale

Our mission partner, GCF, is offering a variety of native plants for sale this spring. Included are wild indigo shrub, purple hyssop plant, wild bergamot, and pawpaw trees! Order online at www.garfieldfarm.com/nativeplants.

Free Tax Preparation

Low/moderate income taxpayers can receive free tax preparation. For more info, please visit: www.justharvest.org/freetaxprep

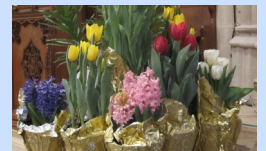
Domestic Violence Hotline

Domestic violence is a heartbreaking reality that affects families and communities—including people within faith communities. In the U.S., 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner violence during their lifetime. Every minute, nearly 20 people are abused by an intimate partner. This is not just a social issue—it's a faith issue. If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, you are not alone. God's love does not include violence. We encourage anyone in need of support to speak confidentially with a pastor or trusted leader, or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800.799.7233.

Sponsor an Easter Plant

You are invited to purchase Easter flowers for the 11 am Easter Sunday service on April 5, or to make a monetary donation to the EECM Food Pantry. Following the service, the flowers may be picked up. The names of those honored and memorialized will be included in the bulletin that day. Plant options are tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths.

Complete the form included in today's bulletin and return it with payment to Norma in the church office no later than next Sunday, March 22.



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES March 22

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

Faces Around the Cross: Caiaphas—Not In My House, led by Rev. Dr. Darrell Knopp. Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom

Continuing discussion of *How We Learn to Be Brave* by Bishop Mariann Budde. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members