



# 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)*

## 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 12, 2026 • 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

### TIME OF PREPARATION

Resurrection... means a passion for life and a lived protest against death. It lives from something different — from the superabundance of God’s future. — Jürgen Moltmann

### PRELUDE

Johann Sebastian Bach

“Jesus Christus, Unser Heiland, Der Den Tod Überwand, BWV 626”

*(Jesus Christ Our Savior, Who Overcame Death)*

“Heut Triumphieret Gottes Sohn, BWV 630”

*(Today the Son of God Triumphs)*

Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Bill Johnson

Leader: We draw near today with our questions intact.

**People: We arrive with our doubts still in our pockets.**

Leader: We have heard the good news secondhand.

**People: Like Thomas, we are hungry for something real.**

Leader: The risen Christ still journeys through locked doors.

**People: The risen Christ arrives bearing his own wounds.**

Leader: People of abundant and real faith, let us worship together.

**People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

\* **PROCESSIONAL HYMN #255** “O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing”

O FILII ET FILIAE

### 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

Bill Johnson

Leader: Friends, there is a particular kind of exhaustion that comes from pretending to be further along than you are. We do it everywhere. And if we are honest, we do it in church as well. We tidy ourselves up before arriving through these doors, tucking the doubt and the grief somewhere it won't show. Too often the church has communicated that you need to arrive already restored. Already polished. Already certain. Before we turn to the story of Thomas, let us confess the ways we have hidden our own wounds and asked others to hide theirs.

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

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**RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Bill Johnson

Leader: God of the upper room, we confess that we have locked more doors than just the ones with hinges.

**People: We have locked the door on our doubt, afraid that asking hard questions means we do not belong here.**

Leader: We have locked the door on our wounds, performing a wholeness we do not feel because we feared what you or this community might think.

**People: We confess that we have sometimes been the ones who handed others the lock.**

Leader: Forgive us for treating this sanctuary like a finish line instead of a starting place.

**People: Meet us not with shame, but with open hands and the audacity of a love that shows its scars.**

**TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

Bill Johnson

Leader: People of God, you are forgiven. You are free.

**People: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

“Adoration”

Florence Price  
arr. Elaine Fine

**FIRST READING**

from “Ordinary Mysticism” by Mirabai Starr

Rev. Sarah Robbins

The sixteenth-century Spanish mystic John of the Cross was also broken open by incarceration. Persecuted for supporting his mentor, Teresa of Avila, in reforming the corrupted Carmelite Order, he was yanked out of his bed in the middle of the night, taken to a remote monastery, and crammed into a tiny, windowless cell where he languished for nine months. John saved his sanity by composing poetry in his head and committing it to memory. His poems were drenched in love-longing. He cried out to a God he no longer even believed in, and the tension between faith and doubt shattered his soul and allowed the light to come flooding in.

Leader: May God bless the truth in these words.

**People: Amen.**

\* **HYMN #253**

“Alleluia! Christ Is Arisen”

SANTO DOMINGO

**SCRIPTURE READING**

John 20:19-30 *Inclusive translation*)

Bill Johnson

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

“Twinning with Thomas”

Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz

**TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**RECEIVING & BLESSING OF NEW MEMBERS (CONFIRMANDS)**

**Westley Kopanic** (Jim Eng), **Isaac Miller** (Brandon Tenbrink), **Darrah Seidel** (Frances Irvin),  
**Michael Simpson-Hunt** (Mario Seneca), **Henry Woolley** (Matt Dean), **August Yoest** (Sam Arnold),  
**Clara Yoest** (Caroline Hough)

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (*in the words of the 2026 ELPC Confirmands*)

**We believe in God our creator, guide, guardian, and a source of enduring universal love. We believe God is not a concept, not an idea far away and above us, but is within us, and listens to us when we listen to God. God's immense love is what allows God to stay devoted to us.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, a teacher of the Gospel, a healer of the sick, and a friend to everyone. He radiated the light that is inside all of us.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit who is seen in nature, in acts of kindness, and in the ones we love. Spirit's presence guides us to act righteously.**

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

We believe the church is not the building. It is the people, the community we have built, and a place where anyone is welcome. The church is a community where we worship God, learn from scripture, and support one another.

We know we still have a lot to learn about faith, and we probably always will. It's okay to doubt, and to have moments where we feel uncertain. Faith means that even when we have doubt or feel weak, we find our way to God. Our faith helps us make hard decisions, take the high road, and do the better thing.

And so we come before God with trust and not with all the answers. In our lowest lows and highest highs, God is there to guide us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

#### AFFIRMATION OF SHARED CALLING

Leader: Do we, as East Liberty Presbyterian Church, welcome these members 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

Rev. Dr. Diaz

Our Father/Mother/Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, power, and glory forever. Amen.

#### SHARING GOD'S PEACE

Rev. Dr. Diaz

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

“This Joyful Eastertide”

arr. Charles Wood

*This joyful Eastertide, away with sin and sorrow! My Love, the Crucified, hath sprung to life this morn'g.*

*Had Christ, that once was slain, ne'er burst His three-day prison,*

*Our faith had been in vain: but now hath Christ arisen, arisen, arisen, arisen.*

*My flesh in hope shall rest, and for a season slumber: Till horns from east to west shall wake the dead in number.*

*Had Christ, that once...*

*Death's flood hath lost his chill, since Jesus crossed the river: Lovers of souls, from ill my passing soul deliver.*

*Had Christ, that once ...*

#### \* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #609

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures high and low.**

**Alleluia, Alleluia! Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word and Spirit one.**

**Alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

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

Rev. Robbins

Loving God, we offer our gifts, our resources, our scarred and faith-filled selves. Like Thomas, we have needed to touch something real. Bless this offering and help us to carry your peace into the world. Amen.

#### \* RECESSIONAL HYMN #257

“The Risen Christ”

WOODLANDS

#### \* CHARGE & BLESSING

Rev. Dr. Diaz

#### POSTLUDE

“Christ Lag In Todesbanden, BWV 625”  
*(Christ Lay In Death's Fetters)*

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](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. Sarah Robbins (she/they)  
Sara Hackett  
Bill Johnson  
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)  
*Director of Music and Arts*  
ELPC Chancel Choir  
Westley Kopanic, *Violin*  
Beadle: Jo Ellen Aleshire  
Crucifer: Jason Van Ness  
Sound: Tim Benedict  
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).

#### ♦ SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:45 am.....**Journey Worship (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* **TODAY after the 11 am worship service** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided. Please see one of the pastors after the service to attend.

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

## Sunday, 12 April 2026 – Second Sunday of Easter

Today is the second Sunday of the season of Easter. The season of Easter lasts seven weeks from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday on May 24.

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

### Prelude/Postlude

These three preludes based on Easter are part of Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) collection of 46 chorale preludes in his *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book.) Bach's original plan was to include 165 chorales in this collection for use throughout the church year.

*Christ Lag In Todesbanden* is a hymn with text written by Martin Luther. It is found in our *Glory to God* hymnal at #237.

### Processional Hymn

*O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing* is attributed to the Franciscan Friar Jean Tisserand (d. 1494) and originally had nine stanzas. In some hymnals it has had up to twelve stanzas. It was translated to English by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), an English Anglican priest and hymn writer. Among his well-known hymns is *Good King Wenceslas*. The tune *O Filii et Filiae* is a 15<sup>th</sup> century French melody that has served as the basis of many instrumental compositions. There are two variants of this hymn in our *Glory to God Hymnal*, #255 sung this morning and #235.

### Special Music

Florence Beatrice Price (1887-1953) was born in Little Rock, Arkansas and graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music in 1906. She was the first African-American woman composer to have a composition performed by a major symphony orchestra. Her *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor* was first performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933.

### Offertory Anthem

Charles Wood (1866-1926) was an Irish composer and teacher. Among his students were Ralph Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells. The tune of *This Joyful Eastertide* is based on a Dutch Psalm tune from 1685. The text was published in 1894 by George R. Woodward (1848-1934).

### Recessional Hymn

The text of *The Risen Christ* was written by United Church minister Nigel Weaver (b. 1952) during the meeting of the Hymn Society in Toronto in 1993.

## 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.

### Inquirers' Class

Attend today's Inquirers' Class after the 11am Sanctuary worship service in the McKelvy Room. Learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided. Please see one of the pastors after the service if you would like to attend.

### Social Hour

The Youth & Young Adult Ministry is hosting our social hour after 11 am worship today in the Fellowship and Garth Overlook Rooms in honor of today's confirmation class. Please join us to congratulate them!

### Wills & Healthcare Decisions Clinic

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 after the 11 am Sanctuary service today in the Good Samaritan Room. Topics will include: Financial Power of Attorney, Healthcare Power of Attorney, Last Will and Testament, Alternatives to Guardianship, and incapacity planning. The Thomas R. Kline School of Law provides FREE legal services to low income qualifying people who need but cannot afford legal representation. With any questions, please contact Tom Sturgill (sturgillpgh@yahoo.com).

### LGBTQIA+ Ministry Spiritual Gathering

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

### RESCHEDULED Cathedral Concert: Nathaniel Gumbs

The concert that was scheduled for today with Dr. Gumbs, Director of Music at the Riverside Church in New York City, has been rescheduled to Sunday, May 31 at 3 pm. This performance is co-sponsored with the Organ Artists Series of Pittsburgh.



### Shaping Our Future

#### Strategic Planning Gathering – April 19

You are invited to join us for our first *Shaping Our Future Gathering* on Sunday, April 19 from 12:15-1:30 pm in the Social Hall. This will be a meaningful opportunity for us to come together as a community to listen deeply to one another and to God. Through guided conversations, we will reflect on our shared story, name what matters most in this season, and begin imagining the future God is calling us toward. Everyone's voice matters. Whether you've been here for decades or just recently arrived, your perspective and experience is an essential part of this journey as we help shape the next chapter of ELPC.

Lunch and childcare will be provided. ZOOM is an option as well for those joining online.

**Please register online:**

<http://tiny.cc/shaping-our-future>

*Background:* In February, ELPC's Session voted to begin a strategic visioning process with guidance from Michelle Snyder from the Center for Healthy Churches. Michelle previously worked with ELPC in 2023, facilitating the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) which aided the Pastoral Nominating Committee's work in calling Pastor Michael as Senior Pastor. The strategic visioning process is the next stage of our work together that will aid us in developing a three-year strategic plan.



### Listening for God's Heartbeat:

**Retreat: April 24 to 26**

**Classes: April 29, May 6, 13 20**

Join us for a retreat at Villa Maria Retreat Center from April 24-26 with facilitator

Rev. Jeff Eddings from April 24 to 26 (by end of today).

We will also offer weekly classes at ELPC on Wednesdays, April 29, May 6, 13, 20 from 5:30-6:30 pm (light dinner at 6:30 pm).

Drawing upon John Philip Newell's book *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: Celtic Daily Prayer*, we will explore the rich stream of Celtic spirituality to help us practice listening for God in our lives. More info is available on our website (ELPC.church).

Register for the retreat (**deadline is today**) by scanning this QR code, or by visiting <http://tiny.cc/gods-heartbeat>



Sign up for the weekly classes at:

<https://tinyurl.com/gods-heartbeat-classes>



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

Cathleen W, Christopher S,  
Doris' cousin Jane, Fran, Greg C,  
Herma and family, Jeff, Jimmy, Kate's friend Jody,  
Kevin H, Kim, Mark, Matthew, Mike H, Nancy W,  
Patti, Raesean, Robert, Sara,  
Shayzen, and Fran Wilson.

Condolences to **Rachelle Calfee** on her uncle's passing.

**Committee Meetings This Week**

**Advocacy Group**.....Today @ 12:00 pm  
**Finance** .....Tuesday, April 14 @ 5:30 pm  
**Deacon Board** .....Tuesday, April 14 @ 7:00 pm  
**Worship, Music & Arts**.....Tuesday, April 14 @ 7:30 pm  
**M&O**.....Thursday, April 16 @ 6:00 pm

**Faith Coalition to End Gun Violence - April 16**

On Thursday, April 16 at 10 am, ELPC will host the first southwestern PA gathering of *With One Voice*, an interfaith coalition of Pennsylvania clergy, congregations, and lay leaders united to end gun violence. Learn how to use your voice to advance gun violence prevention policies and state funding for critical life-saving programs. Questions? Contact Vivienne Selia (vselia@comcast.net). Register online at [tiny.cc/with-one-voice](http://tiny.cc/with-one-voice).

**Family Bowling – April 19**

Families are invited to join us for pizza and bowling in ELPC's original 1930s Duck Pin Bowling Alley, located on the ground floor. We encourage parents and grandparents to attend the *Shaping Our Future* gathering, also happening that day, and will have staff chaperoning kids whose grownups attend. RSVP to Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

**Church Tour: Tower – April 19**

Registered participants can gather in the Highland Lobby for a tour of the tower after the 11 am service on April 19. Closed-toe shoes are required to join this tour.

**Young Adult Happy Hour – April 20**

On Monday, April 20, the *Young Adult Happy Hour* continues at Geeg and Dan Eash's home in Plum. Happening on the third Monday of every month from 6-7:30 pm, join us for appetizers and drinks. Our Young Adult Ministry welcomes all adults post-high school through their 20s and 30s. ALL people and questions are welcome! RSVP to Sara (SaraH@coh.net).

**Social Hour – April 26**

The Neighbors Committee is hosting our social hour after 11 am worship on April 26 in the Fellowship Room. Please join us for light snacks and the opportunity to learn about all the Committee's activities in support of our neighbors and the ways you can become involved!

In our

**COMMUNITY**



**PPC Performance: 50 Shades of Gay – April 17**

Kermit isn't the only one singing about the *Rainbow Connection* these days. Join the Pittsburgh Pride Choir for their 2026 Cabaret Concert *50 Shades of Gay*, on Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18 at 8 pm in the ELPC Social Hall. You will hear songs about *Pink Ponies*, *Purple Rain*, *Blackbirds*, and being *Golden!* You won't want to miss these concerts filled with solos, small ensembles, and the full 140 voice choir. PPC rehearses and performs at ELPC. Purchase tickets at [pittsburghpridechoir.org](http://pittsburghpridechoir.org). Any accessibility questions may be emailed to: [accessibility@pittsburghpridechoir.org](mailto:accessibility@pittsburghpridechoir.org).

**OHM: Run for a Reason in Pittsburgh Marathon – May 2+3**

Open Hand Ministries invites you to join them as a runner or walker in the Pittsburgh Marathon events on Saturday, May 2 and Sunday, May 3. Funds raised support affordable home ownership and closing the Wealth Gap in Pittsburgh. *Here's how you can help:* Register for the Marathon, Half Marathon, 5K, Relay, Kids Marathon, Toddler Trot or Pet Walk events. Choose Open Hand Ministries as your Run for a Reason Charity. Invite your friends and family to sponsor you.

*Participant Goals:* 10 or more relay teams of 5 people. 10 churches. 50 individual runners! Use this QR code to register to *Run for a Reason!*



*Volunteers Needed:* 40,000 volunteers are needed to make this signature Pittsburgh event happen. Open Hand is responsible for getting 20 volunteers for the fluid station at Negley and Stanton.

Please contact Laura Ristau, Marathon Coordinator for OHM, for info ([marathon@openhandpittsburgh.org](mailto:marathon@openhandpittsburgh.org)).

**ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES**

**April 19**

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

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

The Journey with Scripture class reads together various scripture readings for that week in worship, whether from the lectionary or our pastor's choosing. These readings span across the entire Bible. Henk Bossers and other class members facilitate the class

**Seekers – Garth Overlook Room + Zoom**

*Faces Around the Cross: Pontius Pilate – My Hands Were Tied* 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