



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

WHITE OAK,
PENNSYLVANIA

1656 Lincoln Way, McKeesport, PA 15131 + (412) 673-2296 + faithwhiteoak.com

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 22, 2026

Roll the Stone Away



You can understand why they don't want to roll the stone away. "Already there is a stench," Martha says (John 11:39). Why open the grave? Why let out that smell? There could be no purpose. After all, Lazarus is dead.

This is not unbelief. "I believe that you are the Messiah," Martha says (v. 27), confident that her brother would one day rise again. But it is a faith that desperately wants God to provide an escape from suffering and struggle: "If you

had been here," both sisters say, "my brother would not have died" (vv. 21, 32). The presence of Jesus, they think, should protect them from pain and death.

What they don't understand, though, is that the places of pain and suffering are exactly where Jesus goes. He enters dead places to bring hope to life. He transforms the stench of decay into an aroma of thriving. He summons Lazarus out of the tomb to walk into freedom.

This is why Jesus tells them to take away the stone. He wants to open the place that they are convinced holds only grief, and to expose what they believe to be a shameful smell. Yes, it is difficult to face. However, only when the grave is opened can Lazarus respond to Jesus' call. Martha and Mary must remove the stone that hides what they do not want to bear, so that new life can emerge from the tomb.

What are the stone-covered places in your life? What are the places in your heart that you are convinced hold only pain, decay, and fear? In the tender love of Jesus, you do not need to hide them. Jesus is calling you to open them. He will enter these places with resurrection power, transforming death into life and shame into glory. Facing these tombs takes courage. But you can trust that Jesus will bring healing to your brokenness. He is in the business of calling the dead back to life. Let the stones be rolled away.

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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Wendy S. Farone

Assisting Minister: Melanie Thomas

Lector: Sandy Shaw

Organist: Drew Pogyor

Altar Care: Loran Bohman

The Sanctuary Light: is given to the glory of God by Barbara Jo Cush in memory of Maud Ellen Beech.

The Columbarium Light: is given to the glory of God.

Hymns for Sunday

Entrance Hymn ELW 712 Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

Hymn of the day ELW 666 What Wondrous Love is This

Communion Hymns ELW 334 Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery

ELW 773 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Sending Hymn O God, Who Gives Us Life (see next page)

Communion- If you need assistance or are unable to come to the communion rail, stay in your pew, and the Pastor will come to you. If you are unable to receive either the consecrated bread or wine, receiving either one is a complete and valid reception.

Membership- There are many ways to be connected with our congregation. Everyone is welcome to participate in any congregation activities, and anyone baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is welcome to Holy Communion. We welcome your membership request.

March 15, 2026 Attendance: 36

Bible Study Attendance: 11

Offerings:

Weekly Need: \$3,300.00

March 15, 2026: \$771.00

O God, Who Gives Us Life



1 O God, who gives us life and breath, who shapes us in the womb,
2 O God, who calls your peo-ple out to ven-ture and to dare,
3 O God of cov-e-nant and law, re-vealed in cloud and flame,



who guards our lives from birth to death, then leads us from the tomb:
to plumb the bleak a-byss of doubt and find you e-ven there:
your might-y deeds e-voke our awe; we dare not speak your name.



de-liv-er us from fears that kill the life we have from you.
when we de-spair in wan-der-ing through wastes of emp-ty lies,
Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your peo-ple prove,



Help us to know your Spir-it still is mak-ing all things new.
re-fresh us with the liv-ing spring of hope that nev-er dies.
as on our hearts you write a-new the cov-e-nant of love.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: NOEL, English melody; arr. Arthur S. Sullivan, 1842–1900

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Faith Announcements:

Holy Week Services:

Palm Sunday Service: March 29th at 10:00 am

Maundy Thursday Service: April 2nd at 7:00 pm

Good Friday Service: April 3rd at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday Service: April 5th at 10:00 am

There are newly printed revised copies of the church directory available in the narthex. Previous errors that have been pointed out have been corrected. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there are any more errors.

Amazing Grace, The Life of John Newton and the Surprising Story Behind His Song, which last Sunday's sermon was based on, is available on the new bookshelf in the back hallway for anyone who's interested in reading it.

There are **wish lists available** outside the pastor's office for the beautification of our building and for needed maintenance. Please fill out your wish list and drop it into the folder on the pastor's office door. We're looking forward to seeing the congregation's input for this exciting project!

Considering Membership at Faith Lutheran?

We're grateful you've been worshiping with us, and we'd love to walk with you as you explore becoming part of our Faith Lutheran family. Membership is a way of rooting yourself in a community of prayer, service, and shared discipleship. It's also a chance to learn more about our Lutheran tradition, our mission in White Oak, and the many ways you can use your given gifts to serve God and neighbor.

If you're interested in learning more, Pastor Wendy will be hosting a brief conversation for prospective members on April 12th after the worship service. This is an informal time to ask questions, hear about next steps, and get to know others who are discerning the same call to membership. **INSTALLATION OF NEW MEMBERS will take place during the Worship Service on April 26, 2026**, followed by a Reception of Welcome.

To express interest or ask questions, please speak with Pastor Wendy or contact the church office. We look forward to welcoming you more deeply into the life we share in Christ.

Please join us for Wednesday Night Soup Supper every Wednesday evening from 5:30-6:30! Then from 6:30-7:00 pm, there will be Pastor's Series: Lectio Divina (Divine Reading): Cultivating a deeper connection with God through scripture. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex each week for 2 to 3 people to bring the soup and dessert of their choice.

Lenten Project for 2026 will be Bucks for Backpacks! Mission Agape has taken on a backpack program, providing weekend backpacks of food for children within the McKeesport School District. The cost to provide backpacks is \$5 a weekend or \$20 a month. Currently, there are 100 children on this list, which means \$2,000 a month is needed for the backpacks. Requests have been made to Mission Agape to double the number of children, which means \$4,000 a month to cover the costs of the backpacks. Mission Agape plans to work with local legislators to gain support. But we at Faith can help too!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 18th from 4-7 pm. \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Dinner comes with spaghetti and meatballs, bread, salad, dessert, and a drink. Dine in and take out available. Take-out will not include a drink. Sign-ups for spaghetti dinners will be posted. Set up, bake sale, servers, kitchen help, kitchen prep, and clean up are all needed to make spaghetti dinners a success.

Pastor's Podcast- New episode!

Understanding Church: Why Do We Need the Old Testament

<https://www.belc.org/podcast/> or wherever you listen to podcasts.

Welcome, Visitors and Guests,

We are glad you are here! We welcome you to participate fully in worship and to engage in all church activities. If you are considering joining as a member or have any questions, please get in touch with Pastor Wendy Farone at (412) 443-9122 (c), the Church Office at (412) 673-2296, or email flcpastorwendy@gmail.com. We look forward to speaking with you soon.

Everyone needs a church home and family. We hope to be yours!

Pastor Wendy

Council Meeting: March 26, 2026, at 12:30 pm.

Bible Study Updates!

On March 24th at 10:00 am, we will be continuing our study of Hebrews. All are welcome!

Synod Announcements: (further information at swpasynod.org)

Chrism Mass

Tuesday, March 31: 10 AM

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral (328 6th St, Pittsburgh, PA, 15222)

Renewal of vows and blessing of oils will take place at this combined observance of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and our synod. Bishop Melissa Stoller is preaching, and Bishop Ketlen A. Solak is presiding. Ministers are invited to vest (red/scarlet) and process. A clergy luncheon will follow the liturgy; a \$10 donation to cover the cost of the lunch is appreciated.

Citizens With the Saints

Monday, April 20: Harrisburg, P

Formerly known as Lutheran Day in the Capitol, gather with advocates from across the Commonwealth for a day of learning and visits to elected leaders. Our synod's Church and Society committee will coordinate carpooling. If you need a ride, are willing to share space in your car or just want to be eco-friendly, contact Pastor Linda Theophilus at revtheophius@live.com or 412-401-5742.

Lutheran Disaster Response Trip

May 3-9, 2026

Camp Lutheridge: Asheville, NC

Our Synod's Lutheran Disaster Response Team will be traveling for a second time for a week of mission work to help restore and rebuild communities across Western North Carolina affected by Hurricane Helene. This trip is open to adults (18 and over), all experience levels welcome! Cost will be \$200 per person; a deposit of \$100 will be collected at registration to secure your registration. Pastor Roger Steiner is coordinating our registration process and can be reached at 412-913-9391 for questions. **Register by February 28th.**

Save the Date:

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2026

Friday, June 12 & Saturday, June 13

In-Person at PennWest California

(Registration Opens March 15)

ELCA Young Adult Gathering Leadership Team

June 26 - July 2, 2027, in Minneapolis

Applications for the 2027 Young Adult Gathering Leadership Team is now open for ages 18-35. Open positions include Program Lead, Worship & Community Life Lead, and Small Group Lead, as well as several positions for the Communications Team and Music Team.

Synod Youth Mission Trip

July 5-8: Johnstown, PA

Open to youth who have completed grades 6-12, with an opportunity for rising juniors and seniors to serve as Disciple Leaders. Our team will also meet up with the Nebraska Synod youth. More information is coming soon.

Community Announcements: All activities held at the White Oak Community Center, 1798 Lower Heckman Rd

Yoga Class: Mondays & Wednesdays at 11:00 am

Cardio Drumming: Tuesday the 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, & 31st at 1:00 pm

Gentle Exercising: Tuesday the 3rd & 10th at 2:30 pm

Coffee Hour: Thursday the 12th & 26th at 9:30 am

Monthly Meeting: Wednesday the 11th at 1:00 pm-guest speaker, Alyssa from Synergy Energy

Peace Lutheran in Greenock offers an exercise class at 11:30 am on Monday and Friday of every week. This class is open to all ages and all types of mobility and is low-impact.

White Oak Easter Egg hunt on Saturday, April 4th, starting at 10 am at the Heritage Hill Park The Easter Bunny will be there too! Please bring your own baskets.

Peace Lutheran in Greenock is going to have a pie social on Tuesday, April 14th, Ascension Day! The worship service starts at 7:00 pm, and the pie social will follow at 8:00 pm. All are welcome!

White Oak Annual Spring Clean Up will be on Saturday, April 25th, from 10 am to 1 pm at the Heritage Hill Park Pavilion. This event is to remove the litter and debris from the roadside and to increase public awareness of the litter problem in the borough.

White Oak Drive Thru recycling event will be on Wednesday, April 22nd, from 9 am to 1 pm at 2280 Lincoln Way, White Oak, PA 15131. This event is for electronic devices, freon-containing devices, latex and oil-based paints, all other chemicals, all types of bulbs and batteries, and all sizes of propane tanks.

Rainbow Volunteer Fire Company in White Oak will be hosting a Cars, Trucks, and Bikes in the Park event on May 17th from 1 pm to 7 pm. Rain date is May 24th. Registration starts at noon.

Prayer List January - March 2026

All Military & Families

Nikki Amhurst

Katie Bachinger

Becky Ball

Bobbi Jean Barnhart

Beth Brucker

Jean Bickerstaff

Jean Bodenlos

Don Cain

Barry D

Brad D

Kara Eaton

Rose Gombas

Bill Grimm

Jerry Groves

Eric Harshman

Rhoda Jones

Renee K

Ken K

Ellio Keiser

Nancy Kimling

Bill Kimling

Tom Lauffenburger

Berty McMillen

Georgina McMarlin

Charlie Morgan

Marlene Newman

Hanna Pitchford

Helen Pula

Chris Ragsdale

Corey Rhodes

Tracy Scott

Sandy Seitz

Maxine Smith

Steven T

Joanne Tomco

Patty Warnick

Linda Weese

Theresa Zell

Jim Zink

Nick

Trapletti Family

Quinn Family

*Please email flcwhiteoak@gmail.com for any additions or removals from this list.

Upcoming Commemorations

Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, died 1758

Sunday, March 22, 2026

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God's love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of San Salvador, martyr, died 1980

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

Annunciation of Our Lord

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Nine months before Christmas we celebrate the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. The ancient church believed that this was also the date of the world's creation and of Jesus' death on the cross.