



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

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

February 1, 2026

Something Bigger Than Us



The beatitudes could easily be read as a list of rewards and consequences, and the kind of behaviors that will merit one or the other. We are well accustomed to understanding the world in such terms. Children receive rewards for good behavior. Students earn awards or scholarships. Athletes win medals or trophies. Success is a ladder we climb and, if we've done our part, our job is rewarded in the end.

Jesus talks about a great reward, but it's not one we can earn. On a closer look, the nature of many of the so-called "blessings" in the beatitudes is as much about what is done to us as about anything we do for ourselves. Jesus begins his sermon by going up the mountain, but his words push us not to new heights but to greater depths. Poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger, thirst, and persecution—these are not behaviors to strive toward for a reward. Instead, they are circumstances in which we can find ourselves when the ladder we've been climbing falls to the ground. Alternatively, to be merciful or pure in heart or a peacemaker is to choose to get off the ladder altogether for the sake of something bigger than our small selves.

The beatitudes as a whole suggest that Jesus wants more for us than simply collecting a heavenly prize in the end. His blessings assure us that all along the way, no matter our circumstances, we have an inherent, God-given dignity that no one and nothing can strip from us. At the table of Christ, all who hunger and thirst for righteousness are filled. This meal isn't awarded to us for a job well done. Rather, it feeds us for the work still to be done, that of sharing God's mercy and peace with others.

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Wendy S. Farone

Assisting Minister: Daisy Shields

Lector: Judy Haliko

Organist: Drew Pogyor

Altar Care: Loran Bohman

Altar Flowers: are given to the glory of God by the Halikos in honor of Kirsten Haliko's birthday.

The Sanctuary Light: is given to the glory of God by Barbara Jo Cush in memory of Kathryn B Cush.

The Columbarium Light: is given to the glory of God by Barbara Jo Cush in memory of Barbara L Beech.

Hymns for Sunday

Entrance Hymn **ELW 873 Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart**

Hymn of the day **ELW 710 Let Streams of Living Justice**

Communion Hymns **ELW 522 As We Gather at Your Table**
ELW 669 Rise Up, O Saints of God

Sending Hymn **ELW 551 The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve**

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.

January 18, 2026 Attendance: 32

Offerings:

Weekly Need: \$3,300.00

January 18, 2026: \$1,040.00

Faith Announcements:

There is a revision copy of the 2026 church directory pinned to the bulletin board in the narthex. Please edit your information as needed. Thanks!

Super Bowl of Caring Sunday, February 8 – Once again, we will be collecting a Noisy Offering for Mission Agape. Time to clean out your pocket change! Remember, dollar bills make noise, just not as loud as coins.

Mardi Gras – Pancake and sausage dinner will be Saturday, February 14th, from 4 pm to 6:30 pm. Free and open to the community. No takeout and no delivery. There will be crafts and supplies to make masks. There will be two sign-ups for the dinner in the narthex: one for those helping with setup, cooking, cleaning, serving, and another for those attending. Please invite friends, neighbors, etc.

Coffee Hour- February 15th after the worship service with Mission Agape! They will be providing literature on the programs and services they provide.

Ash and Dash-February 18th, starting at 6 am to 9 am. Walk-ins can come in for ashes from 9 am to 6:30 pm. Ash Wednesday Worship Service will start at 7 pm.

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!

Field trip opportunity - It's a field trip to Mission Agape to see what they do and the community they serve! Food distributions are on Fridays. We can coordinate a carpool. No date set yet, but keep a lookout for the future.

New Gratitude List is located on the bulletin board in the narthex! Pick up a pen and jot down anything that you're feeling grateful for.

We are looking for a used wooden dining room table with several chairs in good condition to create an extra meeting space in the lounge area. Please contact the office or Pastor Wendy if you have one.

Nominating Committee for New Council Members

The following Nominating Committee, chosen at last year's Annual Meeting, will present names for new council members: **Kristen Byzek, Margie Miller, Kristi Howard, and Joyce Thomas.** If you are interested in serving on the council, please get in touch with Pastor Wendy or the Nominating Committee.

Annual Meeting Date: March 1, 2026, after worship.

Pastor's Podcast- New episode!

Understanding Church: Using the Gifts that God Gave You

<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: February 19, 2026, at 12:30 pm.

Bible Storytelling Updates!

On February 3rd at 10:00 am, we will be having a pizza party and also watching the movie, Unbroken!

Synod Announcements: (further information at swpasynod.org)

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.**

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:

Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church is having its Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner on Tuesday, February 17th, from 4-6 pm. All at Faith are welcome to attend!

White Oak Senior Activities

Chair Yoga-Every Monday & Wednesday-11:00 am

Cardio Drumming- Tuesdays- Feb 3, 10, 17, & 24-1:00 pm (must pre-register)

Gentle Exercise- Tuesdays- Feb 3, 10, 17, & 24-2:30 pm

Coffee Hour- Thursdays- Feb 15 & 29- 9:30 pm

Monthly Meeting- Wednesday, Feb 11th at 2:00 pm- Motown sounds by tenor vocalist Brian Mahan

Prayer List January - March 2026

Nikki Amhurst
Katie Bachinger
Becky Ball
Jean Bickerstaff
Jean Bodenlos
Barry D
Kara Eaton
Rose Gombas
Heather Grantz
Bill Grimm
Jerry Groves
Eric Harshman
Renee K
Ken K
Ellio Keiser
Nancy Kimling
Bill Kimling

Teresa M
Berty McMillen
Georgina McMarlin
Marlene Newman
Hanna Pitchford
Helen Pula
Corey Rhodes
Tracy Scott
Sandy Seitz
Maxine Smith
Steven T
Patty Warnick
Theresa Zell
Nick
Filapose Family
Quinn Family

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

Upcoming Commemorations

Presentation of Our Lord

Monday, February 2, 2026

Forty days after the birth of Jesus we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There they were greeted by Simeon, an aged priest who offered the song "Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace," as well as by the prophet Anna, who spoke of the redemption of Israel.

Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, died 865

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

A monk who helped bring Christianity to Scandinavia, Ansgar returned to Germany where he was named bishop of Hamburg. He is remembered for his love for poor people.

The Martyrs of Japan, died 1597

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Christianity was brought to Japan in the sixteenth century by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries. The religion was suppressed, however, and in 1597 twenty-six missionaries and converts were crucified. Nevertheless, Christianity survived and later prospered.