



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

WHITE OAK,
PENNSYLVANIA

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 15, 2026

Unbelievable!



This story from the Gospel of John captures the religious leadership in Jerusalem in a struggle to understand this Jesus who restores sight to a person born blind. This miraculous healing is so unbelievable, so contrary to the leaders' understanding, that they reject it altogether, even accusing the man of lying. Their quest for a certainty that feels familiar forces them to reject the miracle in front of them and closes them off to a greater truth—that the Messiah has come in Christ Jesus.

Certainty and its pursuit often disrupt our ability to see reality, which is at its core a mystery. *Mystery* in the Christian tradition refers to that deep truth that surpasses our understanding, as in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity or the efficacy of the sacraments. We know them as true, but not how or why they are so. Mysteries transcend the world of certainty, and our efforts to possess certainty, like those of the religious leaders in John 9, can cut us off from something miraculous happening right in front of us.

How much conflict and division in our church and in our world is amplified by our pursuit of certainty? How many possibilities have we missed in our commitment to the way things are? How often in our pursuit of certainty do we use it to hoard power and keep others on the outside looking in? Certainty is the enemy of community because it rejects the very notion that God may be doing a new thing.

Embracing mystery in our life of faith looks like learning to say “I don’t know,” “Maybe,” and “What if . . . ?” It asks us to let go of our need to control and understand, and to trust God’s promises more than our evidence. Mystery requires a posture of humility and curiosity, a willingness to look for God in inexplicable and unbelievable places and events. After all, we preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), an unbelievable notion if ever there was one.

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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Wendy S. Farone

Assisting Minister: Daisy Shields

Lector: Katrina Syska

Organist: Drew Pogyor

Altar Care: Loran Bohman

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

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

Hymns for Sunday

Entrance Hymn **ELW 614 There Is a Balm in Gilead**

Hymn of the day **ELW 779 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound**

Communion Hymns **ELW 425 Behold the Host Arrayed in White**

Sending Hymn **ELW 324 In the Cross of Christ I Glory**

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 8, 2026 Attendance: 38

Bible Study Attendance: 17

Offerings:

Weekly Need: \$3,300.00

March 8, 2026: \$2,995.00

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

A big thank you to the Marburgers for purchasing the pussy willows for Palm Sunday!

There are **wish lists available** on the bookshelf 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 long-term 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 in the coming weeks. 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, March 21st, and 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.

New members installation on April 26th. There will be a coffee hour afterward to welcome and get to know the new members!

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 19, 2026, at 12:30 pm.

Bible Study Updates!

On March 17th 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.

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

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

Patrick, bishop, missionary to Ireland, died 461

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

A native of Britain, Patrick was kidnapped by pirates at age sixteen and sold into slavery in Ireland. After a few years, he escaped, returned home, and entered the ministry. Returning to Ireland, he successfully served as a bishop and missionary there.

Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus' mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.