



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

WHITE OAK,
PENNSYLVANIA

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 21, 2025

Promises Made Real



Dreams are delicate things, often hanging in our minds only long enough to evaporate in the morning like dew on the grass. Yet dreams can also endure and shape the arc of social movements and the identities of people near and far. Joseph has the rare privilege of an *angelic* dream, of all things—a visitation from a divine messenger, beckoning a change of heart and a change of direction for him and the person he loves.

It is no small thing to change direction in life, especially when family expectations and social norms can make life harder than it needs to be. Yet, Joseph and Mary do a remarkable thing as they face uncertainty: They trust God's promise that something incredible is about to happen. They take the angel's words to heart and lean into the possibility of God's Holy Spirit doing something neither of them expected.

Joseph and Mary are at a precipice, a pivot point, a threshold, a new beginning. Isaiah's language reminds us of the relationship that stands at the center of this divine arrival: God is with us, God is with humanity, God is with (and in) the world! *Emmanuel!*

We stand at a similar threshold every time God gathers us in worship. In word and sacrament, God's promise unfolds anew, birthing love and grace in our lives. Such mercy may seem like a fever dream, a vanishing vision, an impossibility. Yet it is the very thing that undergirds our lives of faith, turning us time and again to what is most important: God's promises fulfilled. As God chose to be with Mary and Joseph, God has chosen to be with us, as we together bear witness to the Spirit who brings about a world where sin is forgiven and God is ever near.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2013 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Wendy S. Farone

Assisting Minister: Melanie Thomas

Lector: Sandy Shaw

Organist: Drew Pogyor

Altar Care: Loran Bohman

Altar Flowers: are given to the glory of God by Loran Bohman in memory of his mother, Marilyn Bohman.

Altar Flowers: are given to the glory of God by the Pogyors in memory of Ruth Wilhelm.

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

The Columbarium Light: is given to the glory of God by Loran Bohman in memory of his mother, Marilyn Bohman.

Hymns for Sunday

Advent Wreath Hymn 949 Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning (see insert-sing all four verses)

Entrance Hymn ELW 265 The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came

Hymn of the day ELW 257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel

**Communion Hymns 902 Come Now, O God (see insert)
ELW 245 Creator of the Stars of Night**

Sending Hymn ELW 267 Joy to the World

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.

Bible Study Attendance: 20

Offerings:

Weekly Need: \$3,300.00

December 7, 2025: \$2,135.00

Noisy Offering for Mission Agape: \$240

Harvest and Home & Thanksgiving Offerings for Sampson

Mills Cupboard Stretchers: \$352.00

Basket Raffle: \$353 for the Quilters

Basket Raffle Winners

- Food Basket-** Kristin Byzek
- Cleaning Bucket-** Drew Pogyor
- Baking Pan Basket-** Judy Haliko
- Baking Pan Basket-** Kathy Morgan
- Soup Basket-** Kristin Byzek
- Blanket and Mug Basket-** Kathy Morgan
- Purse and Towels-** Denise Moreno
- Food Basket-** Sandy Morgan
- Drew's Basket-** Margie Miller

Thank you to all who donated to the Noisy Offering, Sampson Mills Cupboard Stretchers, and the Quilters Basket Raffle!

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning



1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your
2 Dark-er mid - night lies be - fore us, dark - er
3 Lo, the morn - ing soon is break - ing, lo, the
4 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your



lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps
mid - night lies be - fore us, dark - er mid - night
morn - ing soon is break - ing, lo, the morn - ing
lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps



trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.
lies be - fore us, for this work's al - most done.
soon is break - ing, for this work's al - most done.
trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.

Refrain



Chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry; chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry;



chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry, for this work's al-most done.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: KEEP YOUR LAMPS, African American spiritual

Come, Now, O God



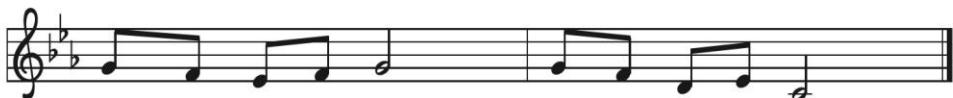
1 Come now, O God, when our love is for - sak - en.
2 Come, when we squan - der the free - dom you gave us.
3 Come, put an end to our self - serv-ing mad - ness.



Come, when our bed - rock of faith has been shak - en.
Come, break the sys - tems of sin that en - slave us.
Come, while the world is en - shroud - ed in sad - ness.



Come, when our deep - est of hopes are mis - tak - en.
Come, though we won - der if you can still save us.
Come, turn the tears of our mourn - ing to glad - ness.



Come, Em - man - u - el.

Come, Em - man - u - el.

Text: David BJORLIN, b. 1984

Music: LOST IN THE NIGHT, Finnish folk tune

Text © 2018 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without securing permission from copyright administrator or reporting usage under valid license.

Faith Announcements:

Pastor's Podcast- New episode!

Understanding Church: Chatting with Bishop Melissa Stoller

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

The Christmas Eve Service will take place on December 24th at 4:00 p.m.

The SWPA ELCA Verney Fund has awarded Faith Lutheran Church a \$1,000 emergency food grant, which will be given to Mission Agape. Thank you, Melanie Thomas, for doing the legwork to bring this blessing to our community!

Have you ever heard a whisper? | Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry | Christmas 2025 (Google > Bishop Yehiel Curry Christmas 2025)

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: January 15, 2026 at 12:30 pm

Bible Storytelling Updates!

Bible Study will be on break December 23 and 30. January 6, Tuesday, 10:00, we continue with our study of the complex book of Hebrews.

Prayer List October - December 2025

<u>Nikki</u> Amhurst	<u>John</u> Konik & Family
<u>Katie</u> Bachinger	<u>Teresa</u> M
<u>Becky</u> Ball	<u>Berty</u> McMillen
<u>Jean</u> Bickerstaff	<u>Georgina</u> McMarlin
<u>Jean</u> Bodenlos	<u>Margie</u> Miller
<u>Barry</u> D	<u>Marlene</u> Newman
<u>Jamie</u> Cummings	<u>Celeste</u> Palcsey
<u>Kara</u> Eaton	<u>Helen</u> Pula
<u>Shelley</u> Gessner	<u>Corey</u> Rhodes
<u>Rose</u> Gombas	<u>Tracy</u> Scott
<u>Heather</u> Grantz	<u>Sandy</u> Seitz
<u>Bill</u> Grimm	<u>Maxine</u> Smith
<u>Jerry</u> Groves	<u>Steven</u> T
<u>Eric</u> Harshman	<u>Theresa</u> Zell
<u>Renee</u> K	<u>Nick</u>
<u>Ken</u> K	<u>Dominick Family</u>
<u>Ellio</u> Keiser	<u>Mundy Family</u>
<u>Nancy</u> Kimling	
<u>Bill</u> Kimling	

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

Community Announcements:

White Oak December Senior Activities:

Yoga- Monday's & Wednesdays- 1st, 3rd, 8th, 10th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 24th, 29th, 31st at 11 am

Coffee Hour- Thursdays- 4th & 8th at 9:30 am

Cardio Drumming-Tuesdays (By registration only-no walk-ins)- 2nd & 9th at 1 pm

Christmas Party- Wednesday, December 17th at 1 pm

Synod Weekly Announcements: Further Info at swpasynod.org

New Director for Evangelical Mission:

Rev. Erin Jones

Pastor Erin Jones has accepted the call to serve as our next Director for Evangelical Mission. Already a beloved part of our synod's life, Pastor Jones brings with her a deep love for this region, a pastor's heart, and a

passion for helping congregations discover where the Spirit is leading next. In her new role, she will support congregational vitality, nurture leaders, encourage creative mission, and help us tell and live the story of Jesus with renewed courage and joy.

New Office Administrator:

Paige Saranovic

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Paige Saranovic, who brings more than seven years of experience providing high-level administrative support in nonprofit and faith-based settings. She has a demonstrated gift for supporting clergy and lay leaders with care, clarity, and discretion, and she expresses a deep respect for the ministry and community-focused work of the ELCA. We look forward to the expertise and steady presence she will bring to the daily life of our synod beginning Monday, December 15.

Installation of Pastor Terri Luper Church

Sunday, January 11: 3PM

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

3104 West Liberty Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 1521

Your prayers and presence are requested as Pastor Terri Luper Church is installed as pastor of Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries. Ministers are invited to vest and process; the color of the day is white. Refreshments to follow, RSVP to bethany-dormont@verizon.net.

Upcoming Commemorations

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Friday, December 26, 2025

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Saturday, December 27, 2025

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.