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**Holy Cross Day**  
**September 14, 2025**  
**Saving Presence**



An internet meme circulating a few years ago chided its audience, “If God didn’t send Jesus into the world to condemn it, I doubt God sent you to.” It’s hard to refrain from judgment, especially when so many social pressures tempt us to judge ourselves as right and everyone else as wrong. John’s gospel puts such competitions to rest: God loves everyone and everything—the whole world, all of creation, every person and part of the entire cosmos, all that is.

At first take, we might be baffled that we lift up the cross as the place where God’s expansive love is so significantly shown for us. But through Christ’s crucifixion, death, and resurrection, God works to unravel all the violence that leads to things like crucifixion in the first place. In the cross, God’s presence is with us: God has taken on all of our human suffering so we can know that Christ’s loving presence is with us when we are hurting too. God accompanies us through hardships. God brings new life in the midst of death! This is the mysterious power of the cross.

Every time God gathers us for holy communion, we remember that night when Jesus faced these hardest moments. Before being lifted up on the cross, he broke bread and shared wine and promised to remain with us always. Jesus continues to be with us in the holy meal even all these centuries later: in bread and wine, for us, lifted high. Indeed, this is the presence we need. It is the presence that sustains us at work, at school, at play. It is the presence that makes grace real. It is the presence that saves us from sin and death, always.

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**Presiding Minister:** Pastor Christina Hough  
**Assisting Minister:** Melanie Thomas  
**Lector:** Kathy Morgan  
**Organist:** Loran Bohman  
**Altar Care:** Loran Bohman  
**Altar Flowers:** is given to the glory of God by Jessica Wurm in honor of her sister Kate Wurm’s birthday.  
**The Sanctuary Light:** is given to the glory of God by Vervaine Mains in memory of her brother, Walter Mains.  
**The Columbarium Light:** is given to the glory of God by Barbara Jo Cush in memory of Father John Cochran.

**Hymns for Sunday**

<b>Entrance Hymn</b>	<b>ELW 432 The Head That Was Once Crowned</b>
<b>Hymn of the day</b>	<b>Hope of the World (see insert)</b>
<b>Communion Hymns</b>	<b>ELW 544 Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing</b> <b>ELW 608 Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling</b>
<b>Sending Hymn</b>	<b>ELW 335 Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross</b>

**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 and all congregation activities; and anyone baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is welcome to Holy Communion. We welcome your request for membership.

**September 7, 2025 Attendance: 36**

**Bible Study Attendance: 15**

**Offerings:**  
**Weekly Need:           \$3,300.00**  
**September 7, 2025: \$2,123.00**

## Hope of the World

1 Hope of the world, thou Christ of great com - pas - sion:  
 2 Hope of the world, God's gift from high - est heav - en,  
 3 Hope of the world, a - foot on dust - y high - ways,  
 4 Hope of the world, who by thy cross didst save us

Speak to our fear - ful hearts by con - flict rent.  
 Bring - ing to hun - gry souls the bread of life:  
 Show - ing to wan - d'ring souls the path of light:  
 From death and dark de - spair, from sin and guilt:

Save us, thy peo - ple, from con - sum - ing pas - sion,  
 Still let thy Spir - it un - to us be giv - en  
 Walk thou be - side us lest the tempt - ing by - ways  
 We ren - der back the love thy mer - cy gave us;

Who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.  
 To heal earth's wounds and end our bit - ter strife.  
 Lure us a - way from thee to end - less night.  
 Take thou our lives and use them as thou wilt.

5 Hope of the world, O Christ, o'er death victorious,  
 Who by this sign didst conquer grief and pain:  
 We would be faithful to thy Gospel glorious;  
 Thou art our Lord! Thou dost forever reign!

## **Announcements:**

**Today we welcome Paster Christina Hough as our guest! We're so honored that you're here!**

Dear Members of Faith,

This notice is to inform you of a special congregational meeting to be held following the 10:00am Liturgy on September 21, 2025. All members are requested to be in attendance to make a decision on calling the chosen candidate for our next pastor.

Dr. Wendy Farone, who has been unanimously recommended by your call committee and congregational council, will deliver the sermon. Her candidate profile and introductory letter will be available for review. Following worship, Synod Vice President Barbara Nugent will conduct a special meeting and vote to extend a call to Dr. Farone.

In addition to the congregational meeting, it is hoped that many will be in attendance for a pizza and ice cream social on Saturday, September 20, 2025, from 5pm to 7pm. Dr. Farone will be present to share in conversation and answer any questions you may have.

Grace and Peace,

George Nelson

Vice President, Faith Lutheran Church

## **White Oak Senior Activities** for the month of September.

- Yoga on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11 am.
- Coffee hour Thursdays-9/11 & 9/25 at 9:30 am
- Women's Self Defense Class (free)- Wednesday 9/17 at 1pm. Taught by Joe Hoffman
- Gentle Exercise Class (free)- Tuesdays 9/2, 9/23, & 9/30 at 2:30 pm
- Cardio Drumming Class (registration only)- Tuesdays 9/23 & 9/30 at 1pm
- Monthly Meeting-The Pittsburgh Belairs-SOLD OUT-Wednesday 9/10 at 1 pm

## **Understanding Church Podcast**

<https://www.belc.org/podcast/>

**Next Council Meeting:** September 18, 2025, at 12:30 pm

**Flea Market:** Saturday September 27, 2025, from 9am-2pm. Bring items September 22-25. Someone will be here from 10am- 2pm and 6pm-8pm. Will need volunteers for sorting during the previously stated hours.

**Paint Party:** Sunday September 28, 2025, from 4-7 pm in church social hall. \$45 per person and there’s a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

**Bible Storytelling News for the Upcoming Week:**  
Every Tuesday at 10 am we will be following along with the Our Daily Bread devotionals until we resume the book of Hebrews at a later date. Come join us!

**Prayer List July - September 2025**

<u><b>Nikki</b></u> Amhurst	<u><b>Teresa</b></u> M
<u><b>Becky</b></u> Ball	<u><b>Cindy</b></u> Mains
<u><b>Jean</b></u> Bickerstaff	<u><b>Vervaine</b></u> Mains
<u><b>Jean</b></u> Bodenlos	<u><b>Birdie</b></u> McMillan
<u><b>Barry</b></u> D	<u><b>Georgina</b></u> McMarlin
<u><b>Jamie</b></u> Cummings	<u><b>Helen</b></u> Pula
<u><b>Bill</b></u> Grimm	<u><b>Mark</b></u> Scott
<u><b>Shelley</b></u> Gessner	<u><b>Tracy</b></u> Scott
<u><b>Eric</b></u> Harshman	<u><b>Maxine</b></u> Smith
<u><b>Renee</b></u> K	<u><b>Fran</b></u> Thompson
<u><b>Ken</b></u> K	<u><b>Corey</b></u> Rhodes
<u><b>Ellio</b></u> Keiser	
<u><b>Nancy</b></u> Kimling	
<u><b>Bill</b></u> Kimling	

## Synod Weekly Announcements:

### A Letter of Greeting-Bishop Elect Melissa Stoller

<https://swpasynod.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a23881a5c641ed10cd7f24da0&id=99342bd7fe&e=fb6e568143>

**Bishop Installation Service**  
**Saturday, October 18: 1 PM**  
**Berkeley Hills Lutheran Church**  
**517 Sangree Road, Pittsburgh, PA, 15237**

By the grace of Almighty God, your prayers and presence are requested at a celebration of the rite of installation for Pastor Melissa Stoller into the ministry of Synod Bishop.

**Join the Choir:** Volunteer to be a part of the synod-wide choir at the installation service by [signing up here.](#)

### Pray Without Ceasing Initiative

Some members of the ELCA have launched a beautiful new initiative: Pray Without Ceasing — an opportunity for the people of God to unite in prayer at a shared time each week. [Please use this sheet](#) to list the prayer gatherings you currently host or attend. Once collected, this living resource will be made available for all in our synod to explore and participate in. Whether you: host a weekly Zoom prayer meeting, gather in person for prayer, or observe a designated prayer time during the week We invite you to share these opportunities with others across our synod. Let us join together in lifting up our voices — for ourselves, our communities, our country, and our world. We are a praying people, and through this initiative, others will be empowered to join that prayer with joy and thanksgiving.

## **Upcoming Commemorations**

### **Holy Cross Day**

**Sunday, September 14, 2025**

Helena, mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and found what may be the actual site of Jesus' crucifixion. Her son built two churches there, and the dedication of one of them gave rise to this celebration of our Lord's victory on the cross.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258

**Tuesday, September 16, 2025**

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

### **Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179**

**Wednesday, September 17, 2025**

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

### **Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961**

**Thursday, September 18, 2025**

A Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary General of the United Nations until his death in a plane crash while trying to negotiate peace in present-day Zambia. His journal, published as *Markings*, revealed the depth of his Christian faith.

### **Nelson Wesley Trout, bishop, died 1996 (TFF)**

**Saturday, September 20, 2025**

A native of Ohio, Trout served parishes in several parts of the United States before being elected bishop of the South Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church, the first African American Lutheran to serve in such a capacity.