



## Friendship Focus February 2026

*We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action..... And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.*  
(1 John 3: 16-18, 23-24)

Grace to you and peace in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

February is the month when many recognize the gift of love in their lives. Relationships with spouses, significant others, children, parents, pets, friends and neighbors all play an important role in our understanding and our experience of what love is in this world. For many, love is celebrated in the covenant of a committed, monogamous, romantic, relationship; for others it’s the relational tie that binds a parent to their child; and still for others love is the presence of companion in a close friendship or relationship with a pet. We experience love in a host of ways based on the various relationships we have with many different forms of God’s creation.

This month, many people all across the world celebrate Valentine’s Day – a time when we celebrate the existence of love in our lives. The history of the holiday doesn’t give us any guarantees as to its origin but it is traced back to the Christians of the early church in Rome. From February 13-15 each year the Romans celebrated a pagan festival known as Lupercalia. The brutal nature of the festival, where women would be physically whipped by the men whom they were coupled up with, brought women hope in that it would make them fertile. Later, in an effort to both Christianize the pagan festival and to honor two martyrs of the early church, both named Valentine, the early Catholic Church sought out to make this day St. Valentine’s Day. The day has become one of the most celebrated holidays of the calendar year where

an estimated \$20 billion in revenue is taken in; over 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are purchased and sent out (the volume is second only to Christmas); over 35 million heart shaped boxes full of chocolates are given; and 220 million roses are ordered for delivery. All of that equates to the average American spending over \$130 on the holiday. This doesn't include dinners, jewelry and the more expensive gifts. Love is in the air! Can't you feel it?

No matter how we might celebrate St. Valentine's Day we should not forget the common bond of love that we all share through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In 1 John, the author is eager to point out how we best know love, and its not by purchasing flowers and chocolates, it's in the knowledge of our salvation in recognizing that Jesus *laid down his life for us*. We see in this text the importance the author shares that God's love is the most important love that we have and it's not something that we keep to ourselves. We are called to love in same way the Jesus loves us in that *we ought to lay down our lives for one another* realizing that we love *not in word or speech, but in truth and action*. This is the love that God has for us; this is the love that is made manifest in Jesus Christ; and this is the love that the Holy Trinity calls us to have for each other.

And so this Valentine's Day, I pray that we might see love in a different way: as not this very dispensable, consumer type of love that has certain bounds and limitations, but rather as the eternal, limitless, boundless love that God has for you and for me. Because as the author of 1 John goes on to proclaim, "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them... We love because he first loved us" (4:16b, 19). May you know the love God has for you this day and always.

In Christ,  
Pastor Josh

## February News

**Pastor Josh** is on a medical leave as he recovers from surgery. Thank you for your prayers and concerns for him during this time. Please call the church office or council president, Mary Ann Icenhour if you have a pastoral need while he is away.

**Preschool Board** meets **Mon, February 2nd @ 5:15pm.**

**Fellowship Potluck Supper** is **Monday, February 2nd @ 6pm.** All are welcome to join us for great food & fellowship.

**Secret Sisters** meet **Saturday, February 7th at 9am.**

**CARE Team** meets **Monday, February 9th @ 6pm.**



**Shrove Pancake Supper** is **Tuesday, February 17th @ 6pm.** There is a sign up sheet at both services to volunteer to help. We need volunteers to help set up, cook & bring donations of pancake mix, syrup & juice. **Following the supper, at 7pm, we will burn the palms from Palm Sunday last year as we prepare for the season of Lent.**

**Ash Wednesday** is **Wednesday, February 18th.** Worship services with the imposition of ashes & Holy Communion will be held at **noon in the chapel and 7pm in the Sanctuary.**

**Rusha Austin Scholarship Packets** are available for pick up at the church office **now thru March 15th.** No packets will be available for pick up after March 15th. The completed packets are to be turned in no later than April 15th.

**Mission Trip** - The youth are excited about going on a mission trip to Charleston, SC **July 12-18, 2026!** To raise funds for this trip, the youth will be hosting a breakfast fundraiser on **Sat, February 21st, 7-10am in the FLC.** Please make plans to come out for breakfast that morning to support our youth!



**Save the DATE!** Lutheroad Summer Day Camp will be at Friendship **June 8-12, 2026.** Registration is now open! See Payton Boyles for registration information.



**Mid-Week Lent Worship** - we are excited to partner with Reformation, St. John and St. Luke again this Lent for community worship services **each Wednesday in Lent at Noon and 6pm** with a meal to follow worship. The theme for these services is “Holy Lament”. This series explores various kinds of lament found in scripture. Together we will discover that many faithful believers have wrestled with grief, sorrow, and questions for God about why the innocent suffer. We will learn, ultimately, that Jesus’ death on the cross– the place to which the season of Lent leads us – is the reason we never mourn as those without hope.

2026 Community Lenten Worship Schedule:

**Wed, February 25** - noon @ Reformation, lunch to follow  
6pm @ St. John, supper to follow

**Wed, March 4** - noon at Reformation, lunch to follow  
6pm at St. Luke, supper to follow

**Wed, March 11** - noon at Reformation, lunch to follow  
6pm at Friendship, supper to follow

**Wed, March 18** - noon at Reformation, lunch to follow  
6pm at St. Luke, supper to follow

**Wed, March 25** - noon at Reformation, lunch to follow  
6pm at St. John, supper to follow

**Stay informed!** If you do not receive our regular forms of church communications (mail, email, phone, text) and would like to be added to our distribution lists, please contact the church office at 828-632-4482 or email Penny at [friendshipsecretary4@gmail.com](mailto:friendshipsecretary4@gmail.com)

Friendship Lutheran Church Council  
December 9, 2025, Regular Meeting in Person

Members present: Jenna Buff, Brian Chapman, Eric Frye, Tyler Hall, Mary Ann Icenhour, Michelle Miller, Kasi Sigmon, Todd Smith, Monica Stafford, Tamara Stafford, Barry Swift, Chris Bowman, Wade Cline, Nikki Icard, Chris Jolly, Angie Mooney, Doug Ramsey, Pastor Josh Tucker, and Dana Frye. Absent: Hannah Bostian

President Doug Ramsey called the meeting to order.

Motion by Michelle Miller; seconded by Tamara Stafford to approve the agenda. Motion carries.

Doug Ramsey shared a devotion.

Motion by Nikki Icard; seconded by Wade Cline to approve minutes from November 18, 2025 Regular Meeting. Motion carries.

Motion by Tamara Stafford; seconded by Michelle Miller to elect Mary Ann Icenhour as President; Motion carries.

Motion by Jenna Buff; seconded by Monica Stafford to elect Todd Smith as Vice-President. Motion carries.

Motion by Michelle Miller; seconded by Eric Frye to elect Charlie Sipe, Financial Secretary; Jane Gant, Treasurer, and Dana Frye, Recording Secretary. Motion carries.

Treasurers report was distributed. Motion by Jenna Buff; seconded by Tamara Stafford to approve. Motion carries. How funds are reported each month was explained for the benefit of the entire council.

**TEAM ASSIGNMENTS/REPORTS:**

*Administration* – Hannah Bostian – No report.

*Care* – Tamara Stafford – Thanksgiving meals were prepared for 250+; met with the Events team for planning for 2026; and have regular team meeting set for next week.

*Learn* – Nikki Icard – Looking at new options for curriculum for Sunday School classes; waiting on confirmation for Lutheroad date. Jenna Buff will be the team liaison.

*Worship* – Chris Jolly – Good response from the speaker from the Holy Land. Todd Smith will be the team liaison.

*Share* – Chris Bowman – New camera is being used for social events and pictures are being posted on the website. Kasi Sigmon will be the team liaison.

*Finance* – Michelle Miller – No additional report.

*Rusha Austin Scholarship* – Angie Mooney – No report. Brian Chapman will be the team liaison.

*Preschool* – Monica Stafford – Everything is going well.

*Building & Grounds (BAG)* – Eric Frye – No report.

*Technology* – Wade Cline – Speaker repair should be finished in early January. Microphone is needing repairs. Tyler Hall will be the team liaison.

*Cemetery* – Barry Swift – No report.

### **PASTOR'S REPORT:**

Pastor Josh shared his report. He shared how and what he reports each month; schedule for confirmation classes and program ministries. He will be taking vacation the week after Christmas. December 28 will be one service at 10 am of Lessons and Carols. A thank you was shared from the Holy Land speaker for our support and generosity. The church was gifted with a crucifix. Our youth will be organizing some fundraisers for their upcoming summer 2026 trip. There are currently 12 youth interested in the trip. Confirmation has 16 participants and 5 will complete their studies in 2026 and be confirmed in October on Reformation Sunday. The cost of trips is a concern for confirmation camp. Several different options are being explored. Shoulder surgery will be late January and plans to be in back before Ash Wednesday.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

► Information continues to be collected for a columbarium.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

► Discussion surrounding a Helping Hands fund. Several occasions warrant help before the Christian Crisis Center can be reached. Council is asked to give thought to this idea before the next meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned with prayer.

Our next regular monthly meeting will be Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 6 pm. Regular meetings will be the third Tuesday of each month at 6 pm. Mary Ann will share a devotion for January.



**Meeting  
Minutes**

**Council Officers** - At the December meeting, and in accordance with our constitution, the congregation council elected the following as officers to serve our church and its ministry: President, Mary Ann Icenhour; Vice-President, Todd Smith; Financial Secretary, Charlie Sipe; Treasurer, Jane Gane and Recording Secretary, Dana Frye. For the complete list of council members and the ministry teams they serve as liaisons, please see page 11 of the newsletter.

## Our Sharing

### OFFERINGS

	<u>DECEMBER, 2025</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CURRENT	\$53,500.88	\$436,976.51
BENEVOLENCE	\$2,892.85	\$20,167.27
BLDG/IMPROVEMENT	\$2,575.00	\$24,961.42
PRESCHOOL	\$35.00	\$3,580.00
WORLD HUNGER	\$268.42	\$1,593.42
BACKPACK MINISTRY	\$690.00	\$6,015.00
CHRISTIAN CRISIS CTR	\$875.00	\$7,710.00
LUTHERAN DISASTER RELIEF	\$110.00	\$1,730.00
RUSHA AUSTIN SCHLOR.	\$375.00	\$17,374.00
YOUTH	\$550.00	\$3,025.00
NOISY OFFERING	\$778.00	\$8,975.50
COLUMBARIUM	\$1,980.00	\$48,001.84
MEN IN MISSION	\$44.00	\$642.00
ADULT MISSIONS	\$0.00	\$530.00
LUTHEROAD	\$0.00	\$6,188.00
ALZHEIMERS BENEFIT	\$0.00	\$4,254.75
LUTHERIDGE CAMPAIGN	\$100.00	\$4,775.00
CRUISE IN BENEFIT	\$0.00	\$27,763.00

### SPENDING

	<u>DECEMBER, 2025</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CURRENT	\$38,054.92	\$414,939.49

Thank  
you 

Friendship Family,

Thank you for all the calls, cards, texts, meals & prayers during this difficult time. Your kindness & thoughtfulness mean so much & we are so thankful for a wonderful church family! Please keep us in your prayers.

Love,

The Agnes Harrington Family



**Friendship Preschool** is in need of some prizes for their treasure chest. As our preschoolers have a good behavior day, do something kind or are standing out in some way, Mrs. O invites them to pick out a prize from the treasure chest. Prizes can be any small toy that you think a 3-4 year old would enjoy (happy meal toys, fidgets, pencils, trinkets, etc.)! Please bring any treasure chest toys you'd like to donate to the preschool and place them in the box labeled in the hand prints area. Thank you for your support of our preschool ministry!

## February Birthdays

Michelle Miller	2/02	Ritchie Bowman	2/14
Tammy Cannon	2/04	Michael Windsor	2/15
Carlie Stafford	2/04	Ethan Hall	2/17
Pam Setzer	2/05	Penny Stikeleather	2/17
Maynard Annas III	2/06	Tomasz Bedzinski	2/18
Levi Icenhour	2/07	Lulabell Harrington	2/18
Mary Icenhour	2/08	Donna Icard	2/19
Monte Rogers	2/10	Theresa Setzer	2/22
Shannon Stafford	2/10	Lorraine Hefner	2/26
Jon Hayes	2/11	Sandra Gantt	2/27
Adalynn Icenhour	2/11		

Happy   
Birthday

## Prayers of the Church

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything,  
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your  
request to God.”*

~ Philippians 4:6-7



**As God’s people we commit to pray for one another, and for all in need.**

Please call the church office to add/take someone off this list.

### **Let us pray for...**

Gina Cook (B. Bowman-1/5)	John & Glenda Hammett (W. Pearson-1/19)
Dana Hollar (L. Hefner-1/8)	Kennedy Quick (W. Pearson-1/19)
Doug Sain (W. Cline-1/8)	Katherine Quick (W. Pearson-1/19)
Jimmy Hayes (M. Stafford-1/12)	Wanda Bentley (D. Smith-1/19)
Jay Dean Mitchell (D. Ramsey-1/12)	Eugene Price (L. Hefner-1/19)
Roy Bolick (P. Josh-1/12)	John Thomas (J. Watts-1/19)
Harold Buff (J. Buff-1/12)	Darryl Adkins (C. Gant-1/19)
Dennis Johnson (D. Payne-1/12)	Nicole Davis McNamara (J. Gant-1/19)
Jerry Bowman (J. Smith-1/12)	Teressa Wallace (W. Pearson-1/19)
Rick Rector (J. Smith-1/12)	Bev Miller (J. Gant-1/19)
Tony Cothren (P. Josh-1/13)	Fonda Bentley (W. Bentley-1/19)
David Day (G. Tucker-1/15)	Amie Bowman (K. Palmer-1/20)
Sam Bowman (P. Josh-1/19)	Steve Sharpe (P. Stikeleather-1/22)
Charles Tucker (S. Tucker-1/19)	Rick Jones (J. Haynes-1/22)

### **Family & friends of:**

Mitchell Pharr (H. Pharr-1/5)  
Bobbie Elder (B. Bowman-1/5)  
Ronald Craig (W. Cline-1/22)

### **Please be in daily prayer for our Home Bound/Extended Care members:**

Fate Hefner, Steve Icenhour,  
Joyce Deal, Roy & Reba Bolick,  
Dallard Lail, Phil & Ruth Lackey.

# Church Council and Staff

<u>Council</u>	<u>(Term ending)</u>
<u>Officers</u>	
Mary Ann Icenhour - President	('27)
Todd Smith - VP	('27)
Jane Gant - Treasurer (non voting)	('26)
Dana Frye - Recording Sec (non voting)	('26)
Charlie Sipe - Financial Sec (non voting)	('26)
Brian Chapman - RA Scholarship	('27)
Tyler Hall - Tech	('27)
Barry Swift - Cemetery	('26)
Michelle Miller - Finance	('26)
Todd Smith - Worship	('27)
Hannah Bostian - Administration	('26)
Eric Frye - Bldg. & Grounds	('26)
Kasi Sigmon-- Share	('27)
Monica Stafford--Preschool	('26)
Tamara Stafford--CARE	('26)
Jenna Buff - Learn	('27)

## Staff

Josh Tucker	Pastor
Craig Sigmon	Associate Pastor
Penny Stikeleather	Parish Secretary
Denny Teague	Sexton
Ian Elkins	Choir Director
Silva Moore	Organ/Piano
Lori Overcash	Preschool Director

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Penny is in the office Mon-Thurs,  
9:30-4:30 (Lunch-12:30-1:30)  
The office is closed on Friday.

**You may reach Pastor Josh**  
on the his cell phone: **828-461-4688**  
or his email: **[pastorjoshtucker@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjoshtucker@gmail.com)**

Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have a pastoral concern, or if there is something the pastor needs to know.