



Friendship Focus

December 2025

And [the angel of the Lord] came to [Mary] and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Luke 1:28-30

Grace to you and peace in the name of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the one for whom we wait. Amen.

As hard as it is to believe, we find ourselves in the season of Advent. The season of expectation and hope; the season of anticipation and waiting.

We wait for the Incarnation of God. In Advent, we celebrate with joy as we hear again and experience the story of Jesus' birth. The promised Messiah has come among us as a baby born in the worst of circumstances. We wait for his coming into this world and we wait for the true message of hope and peace that he brings to us. Most of all, we wait in long and expected hope of the salvation that can only be found through his life, death and resurrection.

We also wait in a different way: with sure and certain hope of the mystery of the faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Not only do we wait for the babe in a manger, but we also wait with sureness and certainty of Christ's coming again. Just as he promised, Jesus went on from this world to prepare a place for us, and just as he promised he will come again, so that we may all be united eternally as one. Advent is about this kind of waiting, too: waiting for Christ's coming again.

Waiting can be exciting at times, especially this time of year. Gifts are being purchased for loved ones, and now, we wait with anticipation as we give and receive those gifts. But waiting is also important as we continue our faith walk as disciples of Christ during this time. We are called to remain focused on what God is calling us to do to make his advent among us known in the world. Waiting begins to look like spending precious time with family and friends, and glorifying God through worship and service during this holiday season.

But sometimes waiting is not easy. The seasons of Advent and Christmas can bring about sadness as we remember past times spent with loved ones who are no longer with us, strained relationships and miles that separate loved ones. It can be easy for us to lose the focus and meaning of the holiday season with all of the attention on shopping, gift giving and the secularized meanings of Christmas.

No matter where we find ourselves in this season of waiting, we cling to the words from Luke with the annunciation of Jesus' birth. In the first chapter, the birth narrative begins as the angel Gabriel visits the virgin, Mary. The text tells us of Mary's confusion and anxiety over the presence of the angel and in his words, "Greeting, favored one." How could a lowly virgin have found favor with God? The angel continues to assure Mary saying, "the Lord is with you."

This advent and Christmas season let us never forget that we too have found favor with God and that God is with us. In our baptism, we are chosen children of God; people who are called to do great things. And, God is with us every step of the way as we do these things and as we wait for Christ's advent this season. Emmanuel, God with us! Even as we get caught up in the busy-ness of the season or as we remember great times with loved ones in the past, God is with us and he has favored us. Let us wait with anticipation and hope as Jesus comes!

I wish you and your family a blessed Advent and Christmas season. I pray that you may see the presence of Christ with you as you spend time with your families, your friends and with you church family. And I pray that as we wait together for the coming of Christ, we may not lose sight of the miracle that happened so long ago in a manger in Bethlehem. May we also not lose sight of the miracle that is still happening today as we answer the call to be Christ's disciples, carrying out his work in the world so that all may know of his love. God bless you this season and always.

In Christ,
Pastor Josh

December News



We welcomed into the body of Christ, **Madelyn Shea Farthing** through the sacrament of Holy Baptism on **Sunday, November 9, 2025**. Madelyn is the daughter of Michael Farthing & Kimberly Knowlton.

Fellowship Potluck Supper is **Monday, December 1st at 6pm.**

Mid-Week Advent Worship

This Advent season, Friendship, Reformation, St. Luke and St. John are partnering together to share mid-week Advent worship opportunities as we wait with anticipation and hope for the Lord's coming. Each Wednesday in Advent we'll gather for a brief time of worship and a lite meal. There will be services offered midday (all at Reformation) and in the evening (rotating among the other churches). Please plan to join in worship during this important season of preparation as we look forward to celebrating the newborn king!

December 3- Noon at Reformation, lunch to follow
6pm at Friendship, dinner to follow

December 10- Noon at Reformation, lunch to follow
6pm St. John, dinner to follow

December 17- Noon at Reformation, lunch to follow
6pm St. Luke, dinner to follow



Children's Christmas Program -

All children of the church are invited to be a part of this year's Christmas program, "Heaven and Nature Sing." The program is **Sunday, December 21 @ 3pm.**

Poinsettias - if you want to donate a poinsettia to decorate for Christmas, forms are available. They are available at both services. Forms can be placed in the offering plate. The cost is \$8.50 & checks should be made out to Country Road Greenhouse. Contact Dana Frye for details.
Deadline is Dec. 7th.



The Angel Tree - has **51** foster children in Alexander County this year. The tags will have the child's clothes size and special items they have asked for. You do not have to buy all of the items. **The tree will be up by November 30th.** The gifts must be back to the church by **Dec. 14th.** Contact Lisa James at 828-244-0219 with any questions.

Church office will be **closed** on **Wed, Dec. 24th & Thurs., Dec. 25th** for Christmas and **Wed, & Thurs, Dec. 30th & 31st** for New Year's.

Christmas Eve Services This year we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior on **Dec. 24th** with a family service at **5 pm outside with the live nativity.** At **9 pm,** we will have our **traditional candle light service in the Nave.** Both services will feature Christmas carols, holy communion, and singing Silent Night by candle light. Please make plans to attend.

Congratulations to those elected to serve on our Congregational Council for a **two year term starting in December:** Jenna Buff, Brian Chapman, Tyler Hall, Mary Ann Icenhour, Kasi Sigmon, Todd Smith. 2026 Council members will be installed **November 30th.** Please note that this is the 5th Sunday worship and we will only have **one worship that day at 10am.**

Thanks to Doug Ramsey, Chris Bowman, Chris Jolly, Wade Cline, Nikki Icard & Angie Mooney for serving on council the past 2 years.

Welcome new members - We welcome the following new members who have joined us in mission & ministry:
Ed Longworth, Sandra Knowlton & Rick Rector. Millie and Alice Bowman have also joined us in membership on the children's roster.

Thank You for providing me with health insurance. I have received many blessings from Friendship since I started working here & they seem to keep coming. You will never know how much you all mean to me. I am truly thankful to work at & be a part of such wonderful, caring people who feel more like family to me each day. Thanks for all you continue to do for me! I am forever grateful for each one of you!

Grateful & Blessed,
Penny Stikeleather



Harvey Bentley	12/01	Wade Cline	12/13
Tony Cothren	12/02	Brenda H. Bowman	12/18
Ruth Deal-Lackey	12/02	Kim Ramsey	12/18
Zoey Moose	12/03	Lucas Mitchell	12/21
Katelyn Hammer	12/04	Kristi Tucker	12/21
Barry Swift	12/04	Sandra Icenhour	12/22
Dara Swift	12/06	Lynleigh Wike	12/23
Stedman Smith	12/09	Logan Gant	12/26
Kyle Wike	12/10	Leon Bowman	12/28
Lynn Jolly	12/11	Debbie Hefner	12/28
Thomas Setzer, Jr.	12/11	Pat Payne	12/30
Monica Stafford	12/11		



Friendship Lutheran Church Council
October 21, 2025, Regular Meeting in Person

Members present: Hannah Bostian, Chris Bowman, Wade Cline, Eric Frye, Nikki Icard, Chris Jolly, Michelle Miller, Angie Mooney, Doug Ramsey, Tamara Stafford, Barry Swift, Pastor Josh Tucker, Dana Frye, Charlie Sipe, and Lori Overcash.
Absent: Monica Stafford

President Doug Ramsey called the meeting to order.

Motion by Michelle Miller; seconded by Chris Bowman to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carries.

Wade Cline shared a devotion.

Lori Overcash from the Preschool was present for an opportunity for Council get some one-on-one time with her and for her to share an update on the preschool. Everything is going great!

Motion by Wade Cline; seconded by Tamara Stafford to approve minutes from September 16, Regular Meeting, and the October 13, electronic vote. Motion carries.

Treasurers report was distributed. Motion by Michelle Miller; seconded by Angie Mooney to approve. Motion carries. Charlie Sipe discussed the 2026 spending plan and sharing that overall, there was a 3% increase from 2025. Motion from the Finance committee (no second required) to approve and present the spending plan to the congregation at the annual meeting. Motion carries. Charlie will get with Penny and have copies out for pick up by Sunday, November 2.

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS/REPORTS:

Administration – Hannah Bostian – No report.

Care – Tamara Stafford – Meals are being delivered after the Monday night community suppers; 46 units were collected at the blood drive on October 12, next drive is January 4; God's Work Our Hands will be October 25 and several projects are lined up; Thanksgiving meals will be prepared and delivered November 27; looking to revamp the Emergency Meal this year due to low attendance.

Learn – Nikki Icard – No report.

Worship – Chris Jolly – There is a financial need in the Holy Lands. A speaker will be at Friendship on December 7 at both services for a temple talk and everyone will have the opportunity to purchase items made from olive wood to support the Holy Lands during this time. The area pastors will be meeting to discuss the Advent season services and the Thanksgiving service will be at St John's on November 26.

Share – Chris Bowman – Motion by Doug Ramsey; seconded by Tamara Stafford to allow the team to attach welcome letters to the wall above the entrance doors to the fellowship hall. Motion carries. Motion by Nikki Icard; seconded by Tamara Stafford to allow the team to purchase a camera up to \$900 (funds will come from line item 5251, Communications) and use this camera for church events and upload them to our sites. Motion carries. This will enhance our social media for everyone to view. Plans are for a media coordinator to be available to use the camera at these events.

Finance – Michelle Miller – No additional report.

Rusha Austin Scholarship – Angie Mooney – No report.

Preschool – Monica Stafford – Motion from the Preschool team (no second required) to put \$26,000 from their regular account and half of the \$42,000 designated funds held in the church account, into an interest-bearing money market account. Motion by Doug Ramsey; seconded by Chris Jolly to amend the motion to state \$26,000 from the preschool regular account and \$42,094 from the designated funds held by the church, be deposited into the money market account at Taylorsville Savings Bank. The principal funds from the designated gift remains subject to council authority. Amendment motion carries. The preschool will not have Breakfast with Santa this year.

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

Technology – Wade Cline – It was asked about a light to be installed over the choir area in the sanctuary. Wade will get with Tyler Hall and see options and prices.

Cemetery – Barry Swift – No report.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

Pastor Josh shared his report. After his surgery in September, he is working a little slower. He has 16 kids in confirmation. This includes kids from St John, Reformation, and Friendship. There will be 5 kids on target to be confirmed in May, 2026. Homecoming was good, now planning Thanksgiving service at St. John and the Advent services with other churches. Installation for Bishop Emily Hartner will be November 15. Christmas play for the children will be Sunday, December 21.

OLD BUSINESS:

► Information continues to be collected for a columbarium.

NEW BUSINESS:

► Motion by Tamara Stafford; seconded by Hannah Bostian to approve new members: Sandra Knowlton, Ed Longworth, Ricky and Dana Rector into membership. Motion carries.

► Ian and Gabriel Shepherd have transferred their membership to Sardis Lutheran Church, where Pastor Oscar Shepherd is serving.

► Hayden Sipe will be baptized October 16, and Madelyn Farthing will be November 9.

► Motion by Wade Cline; seconded by Michelle Miller to adjourn the congregational meeting on November 16, 2025 at 10:20 am, if still in session, to prepare for the 10:30 am service and reconvene on Sunday, November 23, 2025 at 9:15 am. Motion carries.

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

Our next regular monthly meeting will be Monday, November 18, 2025, at 6 pm. Barry Swift will share a devotion.

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING, NOVEMBER 13, 2025,

Present: Chris Bowman, Eric Frye, Nikki Icard, Michelle Miller, Monica Stafford, Tamara Stafford, Doug Ramsey, Dana Frye and Charlie Sipe.

Motion by Chris Bowman; seconded by Tamara Stafford to amend the 2026 Spending Plan to include Portico Package Value Pay 4000 for Parish Secretary Penny Stikeleather. Motion carries. Package includes health insurance, life insurance, disability and retirement. Amended \$11,000 as a separate line item.

Our Sharing

OFFERINGS

	<u>OCTOBER, 2025</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CURRENT	\$33,257.46	\$351,077.74
BENEVOLENCE	\$1,782.45	\$14,822.42
BLDG/IMPROVEMENT	\$3,318.42	\$20,511.42
PRESCHOOL	\$100.00	\$3,320.00
WORLD HUNGER	\$0.00	\$1,325.00
BACKPACK MINISTRY	\$450.00	\$4,550.00
CHRISTIAN CRISIS CTR	\$550.00	\$5,895.00
LUTHERAN DISASTER RELIEF	\$50.00	\$1,170.00
RUSHA AUSTIN SCHLOR.	\$450.00	\$16,399.00
YOUTH	\$150.00	\$2,065.00
NOISY OFFERING	\$740.50	\$7,252.00
COLUMBARIUM	\$375.00	\$44,873.42
MEN IN MISSION	\$48.00	\$548.00
ADULT MISSIONS	\$0.00	\$505.00
LUTHEROAD	\$0.00	\$6,188.00
ALZHEIMERS BENEFIT	\$0.00	\$4,254.75
LUTHERIDGE CAMPAIGN	\$25.00	\$4,490.00
CRUISE IN BENEFIT	\$27,763.00	\$27,763.00

SPENDING

	<u>OCTOBER, 2025</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CURRENT	\$40,622.19	\$316,270.28

Ministry Team Spotlight!

Technology Ministry Team

Our purpose: The Technology Ministry Team supports the mission of Friendship by using technology to help people encounter the Gospel with clarity, accessibility, and hospitality. This ministry ensures that worship—both in-person and online—is presented with excellence, and that the church’s digital communication and tools strengthen the life of the congregation.

As Lutherans, we value the proclamation of God’s Word, welcoming all people, and equipping disciples for service. In a digital age, technology becomes one of the ways we extend that welcome, proclaim the Gospel, and stay connected as the Body of Christ.

The Technology Ministry Team helps create a worship environment where people can hear, see, and participate fully—whether they are physical present in worship or joining from home.

Ministry Responsibilities

We provide technological support for worship and various ministry in the following ways: provide audio, visual, and lighting support during worship services; manage livestreaming, recording, and the digital presence of worship; prepare slides, videos, and digital elements used during services, receptions and special ministries; and troubleshoot issues quickly and calmly during live worship.

We strive to be digitally hospitable by: creating a welcoming and accessible experience for online worshipers; ensuring that worship streams, recordings, and digital resources reflect the warmth and care of the church and align with our vision/mission; and maintaining consistency and quality across all digital platforms.

We serve to be good stewards of our technological resources by: maintaining equipment such as soundboards, tablets, microphones, cameras, computers, and projectors; helping to evaluate and recommend upgrades as the ministry grows; and practicing faithful stewardship of our resources—balancing quality with cost-effectiveness.

Other important aspects of the work of this team is to recruit, train, and support volunteers who assist with worship technology; create clear instructions and user-friendly guides for all equipment and tasks; and encourage teamwork, spiritual growth, and a supportive ministry environment.

Through the faithful work of the Technology Ministry Team, God’s Word is heard clearly, the congregation is connected in new ways, and people near and far are welcomed into the worshiping community of Christ. If you are interested in technology and would like to serve in this area of ministry please reach out.

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...

Gayla Hughes (D. Ramsey-10/29)	Ricky Rector (P. Josh-11/10)
Kent Money (D. Ramsey-10/29)	Noah Davis (S. Bowers-11/10)
Sharon Goble (P. Josh-10/29)	Sonda Bentley (W. Bentley-11/10)
Jeri Haynes (P. Josh-10/29)	Larry Price (C. Bowman-11/10)
Darryl Adkins (C. Gant-10/29)	Jackie Minton (S. Rogers-11/17)
Nicole Davis McNamara (J. Gant-10/29)	Jimmy Hayes (M. Stafford-11/17)
Geleda Murdock (L. Hefner-10/29)	Jay Dean Mitchell (K. Ramsey-11/17)
Wil Myers & family (S. Icenhour-10/29)	Linda Howard (B. Swift-11/18)
Bill & Jan Barriger (J. Feimster-10/29)	Joe Simmons (W. Cline-11/21)
Judy Tabor (L. Cothren-10/29)	Gavin Killian (W. Cline-11/21)
Brenda Hartness (D. Payne-10/30)	Dana Hollar (L. Hefner-11/24)
Brent Warren (D. Payne-10/30)	Guy Mundy (B. Icenhour-11/24)
Scott & Lori Seagle (P. Setzer-11/3)	Darryl Adkins (C. Gant-11/24)
Bobby & Sheng Brown (P. Setzer-11/3)	Nicole Davis McNamara (J. Gant-11/24)
Angela Pisel (A. Palmer-11/5)	Teressa Wallace (W. Perason-11/25)
Chris Grindstaff (J. Buff-11/10)	

Family & friends of:

Pastor William Hollar	(P. Josh-11/3)
Sam Jenkins	(C. Bowman-11/3)
Linda Myers	(S. Icenhour-11/10)
Martha Johnson	(G. Kerley-11/17)
Dottie Hammer	(N. Windsor-11/18)
Angie Brown	(J. Buff-11/21)
Cathy Fox	(M. Sweat-11/24)
Pam Brown	(P. Josh-11/24)
Mazelle Bowman	(B. Greathouse-11/24)
Chris Mundy	(W. Cline-11/24)
Linda Seagle	(W. Cline-11/24)

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>
Officers	
Doug Ramsey - President	(‘25)
Chris Jolly - VP	(‘25)
Jane Gant - Treasurer (non voting)	(‘25)
Dana Frye - Recording Sec (non voting)	(‘25)
Charlie Sipe - Financial Sec (non voting)	(‘25)
Angie Mooney - RA Scholarship	(‘25)
Wade Cline - Tech	(‘25)
Barry Swift - Cemetery	(‘26)
Michelle Miller - Finance	(‘26)
Chris Jolly - Worship	(‘25)
Hannah Bostian - Administration	(‘26)
Eric Frye--Bldg. & Grounds	(‘26)
Chris Bowman-- Share	(‘25)
Monica Stafford--Preschool	(‘26)
Tamara Stafford--CARE	(‘26)
Nikki Icard - Learn	(‘25)

Staff

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

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**

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