



Friendship Focus December 2024

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 40:3-5

Grace to you and peace in the name of our long-expected Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The holiday season is upon us. It's hard to believe we are already making plans. We are already busy preparing for what is to come this time of year. We are already hearing carols and wrapping presents. We are already seeing Christmas movies and commercials on television. We are already taking advantage of shopping discounts. But are we really ready for Christmas and the coming of Christ?

I ask this question because I often wonder this time of year what it is that we feel we need to be in such a rush about. Are we trying to hurry along the Christmas season or is it that we know it will be here before we know it and we must be prepared for what is to come? That is, I think, precisely why the people of God need a time of holy and deliberate preparation during the season of Advent.

The season of Advent invites us into an intentional time spent preparing and anticipating the coming of Christ. Just when it seems our culture presses the fast forward button straight to the Christmas season (and every year it seems that the Christmas rush happens earlier and earlier) we Christians are called to slow down. Perhaps this rush to Christmas time is manifested by the cultural desire for instant gratification - to want things now so as not to delay the product to the consumer. Perhaps this

rush is about our need and desire to feel prepared. Whatever the case, Advent invites us into calm, meditative, intentional preparation for the birth of Christ.

The prophet Isaiah warned us about the need for preparation. In this section of Scripture, the prophet shares with us that as we take the time to prepare, the glory of the Lord will be revealed to us. As we anticipate Jesus' coming, we look forward to the glory he brings.

For when Jesus comes, paths are made straight, valleys are lifted up and mountains made low; uneven ground is made level and rough places are made plain. This is the glory of the Lord that is shown to us in the story of a virgin giving birth to a son in a lowly manger. This is the glory of the Lord that is foretold us in the promises of the resurrection and salvation to all as we await the return of Jesus Christ. And so we do well to faithfully spend time in preparation and anticipation this Advent season as we see once again the glory of the Lord revealed to us this Christmas season.

As you take the time to flip through the pages of this newsletter and take the time to read it's content I pray that you are able to see the glory of God revealed in the ministry we carry out together here at Friendship. Please continue to keep this ministry in your prayers and ask for God to be revealed to you as you seek ways to get more involved, grow deeper in your faith and discipleship. Thank you for your commitment to this ministry and for the gifts of your time, talents and finances that make God's mission and ministry possible in this place. I pray that together we may see God revealed to us this season of Advent. And I pray that you and your family may have a most blessed Advent and Christmas season.

Emmanuel: God is with us!

PJ

December News

WELCA meets **Sunday, December 1st at 4pm** in the chapel.

Secret Sisters meet **Saturday, December 7th @ 9am.**

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 4- Noon at Reformation, lunch to follow
6pm at St. Luke meal, worship at 6:30pm

December 11- Noon at Reformation, lunch to follow
6pm meal at Friendship, worship at 6:30pm

December 18- Noon at Reformation, lunch to follow
6pm meal at St. John, worship at 6:30pm



Poinsettias - if you want to donate a poinsettia to decorate for Christmas, forms are available at both services. (FLC -on table at both entrances & Nave- on the Narthex shelf) 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 questions or details. **Deadline is Dec. 8th.**

Breakfast with Santa Fundraiser for Preschool - Sat,



December 14th, 8-10 am. Bring your children to have breakfast with Santa! Donations only. Proceeds go to preschool needs. This fundraiser is open to the community! Invite your friends & neighbors!

The Angel Tree - has 54 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 gifts must be back to the church by **Dec. 15th**. Contact Lisa James at 632-2451 with any questions.



Newsletter Deadline- Send items for the **January** issue of **Friendship's Focus** by **Tues, Dec. 17th**. Call the church office @ 632-4482 or email your items to friendshipsecretary4@gmail.com.

Children's Christmas program - This year's Christmas Play will be on **Sunday December 22 at 4pm**. We will have Christmas play practice weekly leading up to the play. All children of the church are invited to be a part of the play. Below is the practice schedule. For more details, see Brittany Greathouse.

Sun., December 1 @ 3pm
Sun., December 8 @ 6pm
Sun., December 15 @ 3pm
Thurs., December 19 @ 5:30pm

Church office - will be **closed** **Tues. & Wed., Dec. 24th & 25th** for Christmas and **Mon. & Tues. 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.

Christmas Lessons and Carols - December 29th is a 5th Sunday. We will come together for one worship service at 10am in the Nave to hear the Christmas lessons and carols on the first Sunday of Christmas. Sunday school will be before worship at 9am. Please note the changes in these times and plan to be there to celebrate the birth of Christ!

Congratulations to those elected to serve on our Congregational Council for a **two year term starting in December**: Hannah Bostian, Eric Frye, Michelle Miller, Monica Stafford, Tamara Stafford & Barry Swift. 2025 Council members will be installed December 1st **at both services**.

Thanks to Robert Farrens, Guy Chapman, Payton Boyles, Mason Frye, John Adair & Taylor Payne for serving on council the past 2 years.

Welcome new members - We welcome the following new members who have joined us in mission & ministry: Lexus Gant, Ron & Kittie Black, Nathan Bowman, Ed & Donna Hedrick, Kimberly Knowlton & Madelyn Farthing.

Thank you notes. The church office received thank you notes from NovusWay Ministries and from Stella Hanshew and her family thanking us for the donations and support. A thank you note was also received from the Alexander County Christian Crisis Center thanking the men in mission group for their help with the canned food drive.

Friendship Lutheran Church Council
October 8, 2024, Regular Meeting in Person

Members present: John Adair, Chris Bowman, Payton Boyles, Wade Cline, Guy Chapman, Robert Farrens, Mason Frye, Nikki Icard, Angie Mooney, Doug Ramsey, Pastor Josh Tucker, and Dana Frye. Absent: Chris Jolly, Taylor Payne.

President Doug Ramsey called the meeting to order.

Motion by Wade Cline; seconded by Robert Farrens to approve the agenda with the addition of New Business: c. Pastor Appreciation. Motion carries.

Chris Bowman shared a devotion.

Motion by Chris Bowman; seconded by Mason Frye to approve September 10, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion carries.

Treasurers report was distributed. Motion by Guy Chapman; seconded by John Adair to approve. Motion carries.

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS/REPORTS:

Administration – Doug Ramsey – No report. The fellowship hall guidelines need to be revisited and updated.

Care – Taylor Payne – Team reports that the Cruise In was a huge success; God's Work, Our Hands Sunday will be this Saturday with projects around the church property; Trunk or Treat will be October 31. A new layout will be tried with parking for visitors and trunks. Volunteers are needed.

Learn – Nikki Icard – It would be very helpful to have a new person involved in the kids Christmas program, who would be willing to take over the task of organizing and being in charge.

Worship – Chris Jolly – Chris sent his report that the Team has decided to not pursue the repairs to the handbells at this time.

Share – Chris Bowman – The Team has met and work is being done on updating the website to increase traffic on the site by detailing our events. Plans are underway also for a welcome video for visitors, and also a welcome bag for visitors to be handed out not picked up from the table. An "Events sub group" would be nice to have in place for setting up guidelines, showing layouts of table and chairs for different church events.

Finance – Payton Boyles – No additional report.

Rusha Austin Scholarship – Angie Mooney – No report.

Preschool – John Adair – No report.

**Minutes continued on next page.*

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

Technology – Wade Cline – Monitor has been installed in the Sunday School office for the security cameras. Wires are pulled, now time to install the cameras.

Cemetery – Robert Farrens & Guy Chapman – No report.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

Pastor Josh shared how much damage occurred during the Hurricane Helene at Lutheridge + Lutherock and encouraged everyone to support the Disaster Response. Motion by Doug Ramsey; seconded by Angie Mooney to send \$10,000 from the Noisy Offering to Lutheridge + Lutherock to be used to help with the disaster response for clean up and repairs. Motion carries.

OLD BUSINESS:

▶ A few projects for God's Work, Our Hands will be polishing the brass, work in the kitchen, pressure wash tables, Adopt A Highway, and various other general cleaning and organizing duties. Chris Bowman will look in to the Adopt A Highway time frame for the 4th quarter; Wade Cline and Chris Bowman will look after property details and Nikki Icard and Payton Boyles will organize clean-up of the Sunday School area.

NEW BUSINESS:

▶ Motion by Doug Ramsey; seconded by Chris Bowman to approve Samuel Bedzinski, Harper Buff, Alyse Chapman, Karsyn, and Zoey Moose for confirmation on Reformation Sunday, October 27, 2024. Motion carries. Nikki Icard will arrange a reception during the Sunday school hour.

▶ The Finance Team recommends the 2025 Spending Plan for approval (no second required). Motion carries.

▶ Motion by Doug Ramsey; seconded by Mason Frye to approve a monetary gift of \$500 for Pastor Josh and \$250 for Pastor Craig for Pastor Appreciation Month. Motion carries. Light refreshments will be served between services on October 13 in honor of our pastors.

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

Our next regular monthly meeting will be Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 6 pm, Wade Cline will share a devotion.

**Minutes continued on next page.*

ELECTRONIC VOTE ON OCTOBER 29, 2024

A motion has been made by Pastor Josh; seconded by Doug Ramsey to accept these new members:

Join on November 3rd at 8am

- Ron and Kittie Black - affirmation of faith
- Nathan Bowman - transfer from St. James Lutheran, Rockwell
- Lexus Gant - transfer from Round Hill Baptist Church, Traphill, NC

Join on November 10th at 10:30am

- Ed and Donna Hedrick - transfer from Taylorsville Presbyterian
- Kimberly Knowlton - affirmation of faith
- Madelyn Farthing (daughter of Kimberly Knowlton)

We will need to receive these members over the course of the next two Sundays. Those that attend the 8am service will be received this coming Sunday 11/3 and the rest will be received on 11/10 at the 10:30 service. As we have done in the past couple years, they will receive an engraved Friendship coffee cup and a copy of the red Friendship history book written by Gary Isenhour.

December Birthdays

Harvey Bentley	12/01	Monica Stafford	12/11
Tony Cothren	12/02	Wade Cline	12/13
Ruth Deal-Lackey	12/02	Brenda H. Bowman	12/18
Zoey Moose	12/03	Kim Ramsey	12/18
Barry Swift	12/04	Lucas Mitchell	12/21
Katelyn Hammer	12/04	Kristi Tucker	12/21
Michael Sloope	12/06	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



Our Sharing

OFFERINGS

	<u>OCTOBER, 2024</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CURRENT	\$41,773.60	\$341,572.52
BENEVOLENCE	\$1,305.00	\$16,939.82
BLDG/IMPROVEMENT	\$4,525.00	\$34,020.00
PRESCHOOL	\$490.00	\$3,540.00
WORLD HUNGER	\$50.00	\$1,100.00
BACKPACK MINISTRY	\$360.00	\$4,960.00
CHRISTIAN CRISIS CTR	\$449.97	\$3,904.97
LUTHERAN DISASTER RELIEF	\$1,520.00	\$1,745.00
RUSHA AUSTIN SCHLOR.	\$1,054.00	\$15,036.00
YOUTH	\$27.00	\$10,466.58
ADULT MISSIONS	\$10.00	\$115.00
NOISY OFFERING	\$922.00	\$6,970.50
LUTHEROAD	\$0.00	\$5,650.00
ALZHEIMERS BENEFIT	\$0.00	\$6,161.38
COLUMBARIUM	\$25.00	\$4,599.97
HANDBELLS	\$0.00	\$77.00
GIDEONS	\$0.00	\$1,226.00
SPECIAL DES. OFFERING	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
VBS	\$0.00	\$199.54
CRUISE -IN 2024	\$22,041.00	\$22,311.00
MEN IN MISSION	\$0.00	\$117.00

SPENDING

	<u>OCTOBER, 2024</u>	<u>YTD</u>
CURRENT	\$36,848.22	\$333,836.89

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...

Sallie Hartis (T. Elder-11/4)	Bill Wilson (C. Jolly-11/11)
Martin Braswell Sr. (D. Ramsey-11/4)	Darryl Adkins (C. Gant-11/11)
Michelle Miller (P. Josh-11/4)	Katelyn McKinney (W. Cline-11/11)
Nicole McNamara (J. Gant-11/4)	Martha Johnson (G. Kerley-11/11)
Phyllis Ann Fox (J. Gant-11/4)	Sherri Ireland (M. Sipe-11/11)
Jimmy Mitchell (P. Josh-11/4)	Rosetta Bumgarner (L. Hayes-11/11)
Jerry Bowman (P. Josh-11/4)	Fred & Shirley Bumgarner (L. Hayes-11/11)
Bob Russell (P. Josh-11/4)	Amber McCraw (N. Icard-11/13)
Jamie Deal (S. Goble-11/6)	Kathy Bolick (C. Deal-11/13)
Deloris Lanier (B. Greathouse-11/11)	Kyndall Danner (P. Josh-11/18)
David Richardson (B. Cline-11/11)	Pastor Paul Schronce (C. Bowman-11/18)
Mildred Wike (K. Wike-11/11)	Bob Hymer (W. Cline-11/21)
Diane Buff (M. Buff-11/11)	Jerry & Teresa Wallace (W. Pearson)
Richard Hallman (M. Sweat-11/11)	Phil Hoover (J. Gant-11/21)
Judy Dagenhart (D. Icard-11/11)	Stella Hanshew (P. Josh-11/21)
Matt Robinson (C. Jolly-11/11)	Ray & Iran Warren (C. Bowman-11/22)

Family & friends of:

Tim Lackey	(M. Elder-11/4)
Rev. Neil George	(A. Smith-11/6)
Dave Barr	(G. Thomas-11/11)
Anatolia Hernandez	(M. Icenhour-11/18)
Paul Blosser	(H. Bostian-11/18)
Eisele Herman	(P. Josh-11/25)

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

Fate Hefner, Steve Icenhour, Emo Bebbler,
Joyce Deal, Roy & Reba Bolick.

**If you know of someone that should be added to or taken off
this list, please call the church office.**

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)	('24)
Dana Frye - Recording Sec (non voting)	('24)
Guy Kerley - Financial Sec (non voting)	('24)
Angie Mooney - RA Scholarship	('25)
Wade Cline - Tech	('25)
Robert Farrens & Guy Chapman - Cemetery	('24)
Payton Boyles - Finance	('24)
Chris Jolly - Worship	('25)
Doug Ramsey - Administration	('25)
Mason Frye--Bldg. & Grounds	('24)
Chris Bowman-- Share	('25)
John Adair--Preschool	('24)
Taylor Payne--CARE	('24)

Staff

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

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.