

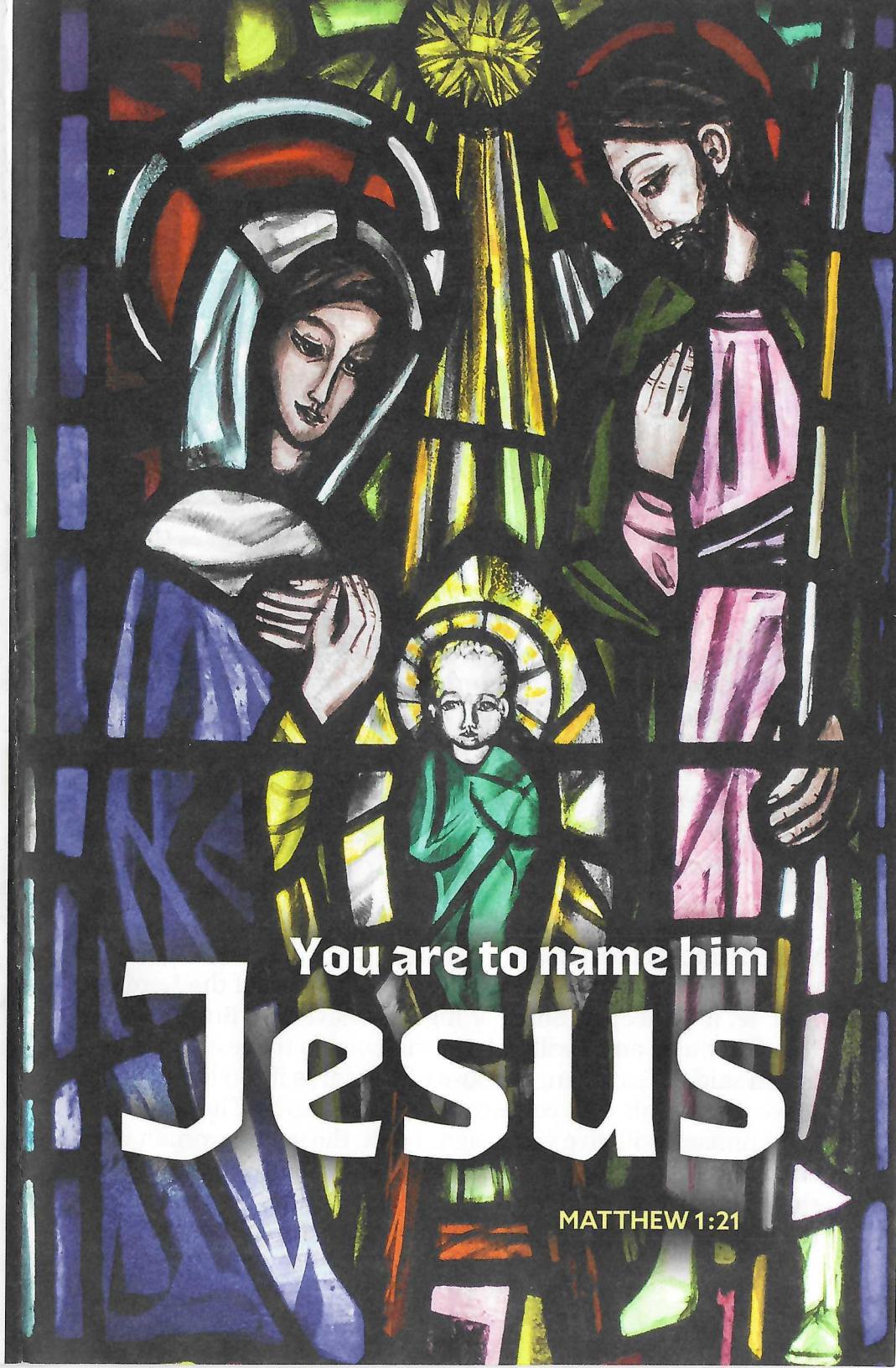
## Promises Made Real

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.



## FRIEDENS LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Forth Sunday of Advent December 21, 2025*

\* Indicates for the congregation to stand if you are able.

Congregation responses are printed in **bold print**.

Liturgy and hymns are in the green hymnal unless indicated.

## WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PRELUDE** "Noël Français" based on a French carol, arranged by L. N. Porter and Alexandre Guilmant.

**\*CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS** P. 56

**\*CONGREGATIONAL SONG "The First Noel"** P. 56

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY** Spoken in unison.

*Sir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE "Praise to the Father"**

*Praise to the Father for his loving kindness, Tenderly caring for his erring children; Praise him, all angels; praise him in the Heaven; Praise to the Father!*

**FIRST READING** Isaiah 7:10-16

<sup>10</sup> The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the child knows how

## Prayer Corner

December 7: Jennifer Waltmeyer.

**Christmas Eve Service** – Candlelight Service, December 24, 2025, 6:00 PM.

**Change in Address** - Dirk Klinger, Room 205, Brookdale South Windsor, 1715 Ellington Road, South Windsor, CT. 06074

## Today's Leaders

Service, Service, Sunday School Christmas Program Organist, Harold Morgan Lector, Ann Miller Counters, Jean & Gary Klinger Head Usher, Dave Henninger Usher, Ed Tietsworth, Ed Hornung, Rondey Troutman Greeters, Ed & Jane Tietsworth.

**Flowers** – In loving memory of Grandma Kline's birthday.

**Bulletin** – In honor of Chap Klinger by Jean and family.

**Attendance: 20 (12/14/2025)**

<b>Offering. December 14, 2025</b> – Current Exp.:	\$675.00
Other Offering:	\$100.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$775.00</b>

**Weekly Offering Needed: \$2,362.87**

## Volunteers for Christmas Eve Service, 12/24/2025 - Service

Pastor Barry Spatz Lector, Damaris Merwine Lay Assistant, Julie Klinger & Ron Radel Counters, Ron & Janet Radel Head Usher, Dave Henninger Ushers, Ed Tietsworth, Rick Herring, Ed Hornung Greeters, Cindy & Rick Herring and Joan Smith.

**Volunteers for 12/28/2025** – Service, Lisa Maurer Lector, Lisa Maurer Counters, Melody Swartz & Christy Leiter Head Usher, Dave Henninger Ushers, Larry Klinger, AJ Kline, Ann Miller Greeters, Katie & Jason Wolfgang.

**FRIEDENS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
 510 East Main St. PO Box 375, Hegins, PA 17938 ph. 570-682-9690  
**Website:** [HTTPS://www.thefriedenslutheran.com](https://www.thefriedenslutheran.com)  
**Church e-mail:** [friedenslutheran4@gmail.com](mailto:friedenslutheran4@gmail.com)  
**Designated Pastor:** Pastor Lee A. Diefenderfer, 1295 Red Dale Road,  
 Orwigsburg, PA 17961, 610-858-4136  
**Council President:** Damaris Merwine, 570-985-0644  
**Worship time – 10:30 AM**

*In the name of Jesus Christ, we strive to serve all people in our community and world. We extend a warm welcome to all visitors who are worshipping with us today. Please sign the guest register in the narthex and complete a visitor's pew card, placing it in the offering plate.*

### **December 21, 2025 \* Forth Sunday of Advent**



Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

### **Calendar**

Today's Service: Sunday School Christmas Program.  
 December 24, Pastor Barry Spatz.  
 December 28, Message, Lisa Maurer.  
 January 4, Pastor Suzanne Elliot.  
 January 11, Pastor Bary Spatz.

### **Announcements**

- **12/24/2025** – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion, 6 PM.
- **1/14/2026** – Council Meeting, 6:00 PM.
- **1/11/2026** – Installation of new council members.

to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### ***Lighting of the Advent Candles.***

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. ***Glory to you, O Lord.***

#### **\*GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

### **CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM**

**Telling the Christmas Story and Song**

**"The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy"**

**Congregational Song, "Away in the Manger" P. 67**

**Recitation: "Filling the Christmas Stocking."**

**Sunday School Songs: Youth Singing**

**"Joy to the World"**

**"Wasn't That a Mighty Day"**

**Congregational Song, Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful" P. 45**

**\*SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. ***And also with you.***

**OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** "The Journey to Bethlehem" by Cesar Franck, arranged by David Paxton.

**\*DOXOLOGY**

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.***

**GIFTS for BABY JESUS**

**Sunday School Songs: Youth Singing**

**"Happy Hallelujah Christmas Song"**

**"Go Tell it on the Mountain"**

**\*BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**\*HYMN, "Angles We Have Heard On High"**

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**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. ***Thanks be to God***

**\*POSTLUDE** "Fanfare Triumphant" by Craig A. Penfield

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Please join us for fellowship and refreshments following the service.

A Special thanks to the Sunday school teachers, Mary Jane Allvord, Damaris Merwine and Julie Klinger as well as piano accompanist, Ann Miller for the children's Sunday School Program. Please take the time to thank everyone who provided the wonderful refreshments for the congregational fellowship following the service.