

Something Bigger Than Us

The beatitudes could easily be read as a list of rewards and consequences, and the kind of behaviors that will merit one or the other. We are well accustomed to understanding the world in such terms. Children receive rewards for good behavior. Students earn awards or scholarships. Athletes win medals or trophies. Success is a ladder we climb and, if we've done our part, our job is rewarded in the end.

Jesus talks about a great reward, but it's not one we can earn. On a closer look, the nature of many of the so-called "blessings" in the beatitudes is as much about what is done to us as about anything we do for ourselves. Jesus begins his sermon by going up the mountain, but his words push us not to new heights but to greater depths. Poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger, thirst, and persecution—these are not behaviors to strive toward for a reward. Instead, they are circumstances in which we can find ourselves when the ladder we've been climbing falls to the ground. Alternatively, to be merciful or pure in heart or a peacemaker is to choose to get off the ladder altogether for the sake of something bigger than our small selves.

The beatitudes as a whole suggest that Jesus wants more for us than simply collecting a heavenly prize in the end. His blessings assure us that all along the way, no matter our circumstances, we have an inherent, God-given dignity that no one and nothing can strip from us. At the table of Christ, all who hunger and thirst for righteousness are filled. This meal isn't awarded to us for a job well done. Rather, it feeds us for the work still to be done, that of sharing God's mercy and peace with others.

Blessed ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

MATTHEW 5:9



FRIEDENS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany ✨ February 1, 2026

* 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, ANNOUNCEMENTS and Prelude

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters. **Amen.**

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

Mighty God, lover of justice,
you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ and forgives your sin in † Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace. **Amen.**

***HYMN** "As with Gladness Men of Old." Vs. 1-4 P. 82

***PRAYER OF THE DAY** Spoken in unison.
Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you 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!

Prayer Corner

Linda Kieffer; Dave Schreiner.

Today's Leaders

Service, Pastor Barry Spatz, with Holy Communion Lector, Scott Deiter Lay Assistant, Jess Henninger Counter, Ann Miller & Vicki Troutman Lector, Ann Miller Head Usher, Mike Deiter Ushers, Larry Klinger, AJ Kline, Ann Miller Greeters, Ruth Wetzel and Orpha Troutman.

Bulletin – In honor of Damon's birthday, love Jean.

Flowers – In honor of the 2026 Church Council Members, Sue & Mike Deiter.

Attendance: No Service.

Weekly Offering Needed: \$2,638.92

Volunteers the Week of 2/8/2026 - Service, Janet & Ron Radel Lector, Damaris Merwine Organist, Harold Morgan Counter, Jean & Gary Klinger Lector, Ann Miller Head Usher, Mike Deiter Ushers, Christy Leiter, Damaris Merwine, Ed Tietsworth Greeters, Julie Klinger, Ruth Wetzel.

Altar Rosebud

The rosebud is in honor of Colin Theodore Erdman, son of Jared and Lindsay Erdman born December 30th, 2025. Proud grandparents are Mr. & Mrs. Rick Miner and Mr. & Mrs. Bard Erdman. Proud great grandparents Mr. & Mrs. Daniel R. Carl.

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

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.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany ✠ February 1, 2026



Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Calendar

Today's Service, Pastor Barry Spatz.

February 8, Janet & Ron Radel.

February 15, Pastor Barry Spatz.

February 18, Ash Wednesday, Pastor Lee Diefenderfer.

February 22, Rachel & Jim Hepler.

Announcements

- 2/8/2026 – Souper Bowl – Following the service.
- 3/21/2025 - March Spring Bazaar, 9 – 11 AM.
- 4/29/2026 – Tentative date for Mr. Sticky sale.

FIRST READING Micah 6:1-8

¹ Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ² Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel. ³ "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. ⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord." ⁶ "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" ⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm: 15

¹ Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

² **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right, who speak the truth from their heart;**

³ they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

⁴ **In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the Lord. They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**

⁵ They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

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

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of

God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. ²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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

***GOSPEL** Matthew 5:1-12

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

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

CHILDREN'S & CONGREGATIONAL MESSAGE, Pastor Spatz.

HYMN "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"

P. 90

***PRAYERS** Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

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

OFFERING/OFFERTORY

***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.

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

(Spoken)

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY"

(Spoken)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

***WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

***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.

HOLY COMMUNION

***COMMUNION PRAYER**

We give you thanks almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

***BLESSING**

***SENDING HYMN** "I Love to Tell the Story."

P. 390

***DISMISSAL**

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

Postlude