

Go and work in the vineyard today

MATTHEW 21:28



FRIEDENS LUTHERAN CHURCH

18th Sunday After Pentecost ✠ September 27, 2026

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

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

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRELUDE

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

Amen

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Compassionate God,
we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive free this healing gift of grace.

*HYMN "Jesus Shall Reign" P. 530

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen

*HYMN OF PRAISE. "Praise to the Father" (Sung)
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: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. ²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.
The word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalms 25:1-9

¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

³ Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴ Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶ Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

⁸ You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way.

⁹ You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

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

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?'" ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁸ "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his

father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him."

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

CONGREGATIONAL MESSAGE – Damaris Merwine.

HYMN "Today Your Mercy Calls Us" P. 304

*PRAYERS Hear us, O God. *Your mercy is great.*

*LORD'S PRAYER (Spoken)

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.

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

OFFERING/OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY (Sung)

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.

*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.

*CLOSING HYMN "I Leave, as You Have Promised, Lord"
P. 349

*DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE

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Designated Pastor: Pastor Barry Spatz, 406 Musselman Road,
Fredericksburg, PA, 17026 484-332-0258

Council President: Ed Tietsworth, (570) 292-1061

Calendar

October 4, 2026 – Pastor Barry Spatz with Holy Communion. First day of Fall Sunday School.

October 11, 2026 – Pastor Barry Spatz.

October 18, 2026 – Carole Hepler

October 25, 2026 – Pastor Barry Spatz with Reformation Sunday.

Announcements

September 23, 2026 – The Chosen Bible Study, 6:30 PM, with Pastor Barry.

October 3, 2026 – Fall Bazaar. Hoagie order sheets and volunteer sign-up sheets are in the Sunday School room. We need soup donations, baked goods, crafts as well as raffle basket sponsors/donations.

Prayer Corner

Rick Herring; Terry Schwartz; Saralinn & Joe Grantz; Linda & Lee Kiefer; Daniel & Mary Carl; Judy Huntzinger; Tim Koppenhaver; Linda Sanders; Kenneth Klinger; Unborn baby of Jory and Trisha Fetterolf; Daphne Snyder. Friends and Family of Doris Smith.

Today's Leaders – Service, Damaris Merwine Lector, Ann Miller Counter, Ann Miller & Vicki Troutman Head Usher, Rick Herring Ushers, Mike Deiter, Ed Tietsworth, Ed Hornung.

Flowers – Glory of God, in honor of grandchildren and great grandchildren by Ruth.

Bulletin – In honor of grandchildren and great grandchildren by Ruth.

Attendance: 31 (9/20/26) Offering:

Current	\$1,437.00
Other	\$83.00
Total	\$1,520.00

Weekly Offering Needed: \$2,362.87

Leaders, 10/2/2026 – Service, Pastor Barry Spatz Lector, Ann Miller Lay Assistant, Ruth Wetzel Counter, Jean and Gary Klinger Head Usher, Dave Henninger Ushers, Christy Leiter, Damaris Merwine, Ed Tietsworth.

From Pastor Barry - As your designated pastor, I have concerns to address with you the members of Friedens Church. If you are aware or know of an individual who is in the hospital, nursing home, or home bound and would like a pastoral visit PLEASE contact me. My cell number is 484-332-0258, please leave a message or text. My email address pastorb1021@gmail.com. I will attempt to answer all types of messages ASAP. Thank you.

Birthday Card Shower – Alice Snyder will be turning 95 on October 2, 2026. Alice's address is 22 Snyder Road, Hegins, PA 17938.

Thank You – Melody Schwartz would like to thank everyone for all prayers during her illness.

Marching Orders

Members of the string quartet look around at each other, nod, and begin tuning up to play. The basketball team huddles around the coach as she draws up the play on a dry-erase board. The volunteer teams go over their assignments one last time before heading off to their positions for the charity run. In each instance, before beginning their mission, the group takes a moment to get on the same page, to get their marching orders. In our lives as disciples of Christ, that moment is baptism.

Our marching orders, our mission guidelines, are marked on our hearts in baptism. The good news of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Jesus Christ that is poured over us spills out in our lives, and we are called to be agents of restoration: to bind up the broken-hearted, to care for all people and all creation. Just as the coach draws up the play or someone makes a list of the things that need to get done, we are imbued with a way of life in baptism's waters. Our motivation for this way of life is the love that has also been shown to us in Jesus: the love that feeds us each week as we gather around our Savior's table.

Even if we are sometimes reluctant, like the son in Jesus' parable who initially says he will not go to the vineyard but eventually goes, we are motivated to carry out the work to which God has called us because of the baptismal grace we have received. And whenever we pause to collect ourselves—whether it's tuning up before the performance, getting the play in the huddle, or just taking a deep breath before beginning the next item on the to-do list—we think of baptism, when our marching orders and our motivations are indelibly marked on us by Jesus.