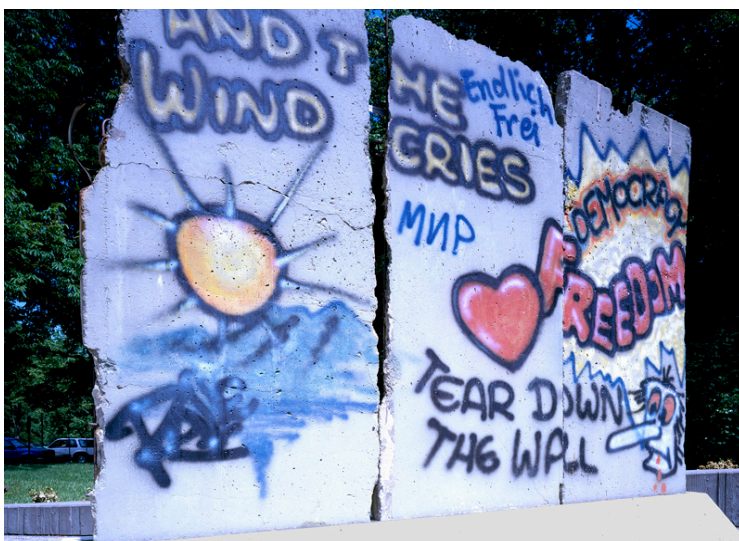




Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



*Piece of the Berlin Wall
in Virginia (1989)*

April 21, 2024

11:00am

WELCOME TO FRIENDS CHURCH!

We are honored that you have chosen to spend your Sunday morning with us. Friends Congregational Church is an **Open & Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ. We welcome all people into the full life and ministry of our church—people of all ages, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

FIRST TIME AT FRIENDS? If you are a guest with us today, please let us know. Welcome cards are located in the chair backs to fill out and leave in the offering plate during today's offertory. If you are joining us online for today's service, you will find an Online Visitor Card at <https://www.friends-ucc.org/your-first-visit>. We are so glad you are here, so please let us know if there is anything we can do for you.

CHILDCARE: We invite children to participate fully in our community and worship life. Children of all ages are welcome in worship or you may choose childcare, offered for ages 1-5 in the nursery down the hall through the piano side double doors. We currently have Covid Protocols in place, which you can find posted outside the nursery door.

WiFi: To access church WiFi, please use this login information:
WiFi – The Promised LAN Password: stillspeaking

RESTROOMS are located through the double doors on the piano side of the sanctuary. Gender assigned restrooms are straight down at the end of the hall, and a gender neutral restroom is to the immediate right.

LEADING IN TODAY'S SERVICE:

Lay Leaders: Diane Simpson & Katy Stewart
Communion Stewards: Susan Fontaine & Grace Jackson
Greeters: Carol Wilson & Adrian Capetillo

Next Sunday, April 28
Lay Leaders: Sydney Zentell & Tom Vogel
Greeters: Megan Aleva & Kristen Hibbits

We give God thanks for our volunteers sharing their gifts. To volunteer for a Sunday as a lay leader, communion steward, or greeter, email worship@friends-ucc.org.

COMMUNION ON REQUEST: While the sacrament of communion is observed in worship on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at Friends, communion is available any Sunday on request. If you would like to receive communion on a 2nd, 4th, or 5th Sunday, please find one of our pastors to serve you at the conclusion of the worship service.

Eastertide - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Easter is not just one day—it's a whole season. Throughout these 50 days, we celebrate and ponder the mystery of the resurrection and the promise of new life.

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:

“We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Brooke Dooley

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Katy Stewart

One: Easter people, raise your voices, for you belong to the Risen Christ!

All: We belong to Christ, and so we share in Christ together.

One: Just as we share in Christ together, so we are called to share Christ with the world.

All: We share Christ by proclaiming the good news of God's love to the world.

One: Easter people, you belong to the Risen Christ!

All: Because we belong to Christ, we will witness to the Love that welcomes all. Alleluia! Amen.

*OPENING HYMN - #573 Lead On Eternal Sovereign

Tune: Lancashire

*INVOCATION

Katy Stewart

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Trent Williams

Children in the sanctuary are invited to come to the front, and children watching online are invited to get closer to their screen. All are invited to sing a verse of NCH #524 "This Little Light of Mine" to begin the children's message.

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Brooke Dooley

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Brooke Dooley

Almighty God, in raising Jesus from the grave, you shattered the power of sin and death. We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear, bound by the ways that lead to death. Forgive us, God of mercy. Help us to trust your power to change our lives and make us new, that we may know the joy of life abundant given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Brooke Dooley

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.
Many: And also with you!

*HYMN OF RESPONSE #572 When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

Tune: Go Down, Moses

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

CHORAL ANTHEM: To God Sing Praises (from *Regina Coeli*, K. 108) - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, arranged by Patrick Liebergen

To God sing praises forever! Alleluia. Let all give thanks and be joyful. Alleluia.

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST PREACHER

Trent Williams

READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLESActs 5:17-32, NRSV
Nikki Stahl

Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life." When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching. When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside." Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. Then someone arrived and announced, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your

teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: **God is still speaking. Thanks be to God!**

THE MESSAGE

Nikki Stahl

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

INVITATION TO SHARE

Katy Stewart

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at bit.ly/givetofriendsucc
Venmo to 979-307-8860 or @friendsucc

***DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below: alleluia, alleluia!
Praise God the source of all our gifts,
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts,
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Trent Williams

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Trent Williams, Brooke Dooley

***SUNG COMMUNION RESPONSE**

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Brooke Dooley

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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trent Williams

***CLOSING HYMN - #55** Rejoice, You Pure in Heart

Tune: Marion

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

- Prelude: This Joyful Eastertide - George R. Woodward
Offertory: I Love to Tell the Story - William G. Fischer, arranged by Michael Cox
Communion: My Jesus, I Love Thee - Adoniram J. Gordon, arranged by Martha Mier
Postlude: Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart - Arthur H. Messiter, arranged by Cindy Berry

Scriptures for Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 28, 2024: Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 9:1-20

GETTING CONNECTED AT FRIENDS

GET CONNECTED! On Fridays we email out a newsletter called “This Week at Friends” that shares important information and all of the activities and events going on at Friends. Subscribe by contacting office@friends-ucc.org.

EVENTS THIS WEEK

PERIOD CARE PRODUCT DRIVE FOR BRAZOS CHURCH PANTRY, APRIL 5-21: Friends’ quarterly Period Care Product Drive STARTS on Sunday, April 5th, and ends on April 21st. Friends UCC will again be collecting period care products for distribution at Brazos Church Pantry. Smaller packages for individual distribution are preferred, with an emphasis on pads and tampons. You can drop them in the collection bins in the narthex or by the office. NO TIME TO SHOP??? Visit our Wish list online at <https://amzn.to/3U2kmtJ> or you can find the QR code on the donation bins. For more information, email Pam Engler at penglertx@gmail.com. Thank you!

BACK BAY MISSION HYGIENE KIT COLLECTION, APRIL 21: Friends Church is collecting items for hygiene kits to be delivered to Back Bay Mission, a ministry of the United Church of Christ serving individuals and families facing homelessness and poverty. This year Back Bay Mission (located in Biloxi, Miss.) is celebrating 102 years in operation! Friends Church has set a goal of gathering 102 hygiene kits! Shopping is easy. Go to the Friends webpage to get link and decide what you would like to purchase to get us to our goal of 102 hygiene kits. Items will be shipped directly to the church. If you would rather just write a check, that is GREAT as well. Make check out to Friends Church and put Hygiene kits in memo line. Funds will be used to purchase needed supplies. All items need to be received at the church by May 18. We will have a packing party after church to assemble the kits! Please direct any questions to Anne at awehrly@suddenlink.net.

YOUTH GROUP ATTENDING “AN EVENING WITH CHRIS HOFFMAN”, APRIL 21: The Friends Youth Group will be meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Bryan at 5:00pm tonight to attend “An Evening with Chris Hoffman.” Chris not only enriches Friends Church with his many musical talents, but he also teaches and supports many of our Friends Youth. All are welcome to join the Friends Youth tonight as we support Chris!

LINDA COATS BOOK CLUB, APRIL 25: For April, the book club will be reading Shane Claiborne's *Beating Guns: Hope for People Who Are Weary of Violence*. Join us for discussion at 6:30pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SABBATICAL FOR SENIOR PASTOR, APRIL 1 – JULY 15: Pastor Dan began his three-and-a-half-month sabbatical. As a congregation, we can support Pastor Dan during this sabbatical by praying for his well-being and continuing to engage with and support the ministries of Friends Church, while eagerly anticipating the wisdom and inspiration he'll bring back to us. With hope, this intentional season of rest will bear fruit for years to come.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND SHARE

CROCKETT ELEMENTARY BOOK FAIR, MAY 22: Our school book fair for the children of Crockett Elementary ends on May 22nd. You can donate books by placing them in the box outside the office, or you can donate gift cards or money, and we will buy books with your donations. If you have questions, please contact Jodie Robinson (jocelinbrune@gmail.com) or Pam Engler (penglertx@gmail.com). Thank you!

SUPPORT OUR PODCAST: The "Friends Congregational Church Sermons" podcast is getting downloads across the country and even overseas! Each episode, featuring a sermon and introduced by a different church member, is an evangelism and outreach tool for all of us at Friends. Support the podcast by sharing it widely. So far the record number of downloads for an episode is 69. With your help we can hit at least 100 every week! You can also support the podcast by lending your voice to it. Contact A/V Tech Jeremy Dudo to record the intro for an episode: av@friends-ucc.org.

SPRING CLEANING WORKDAY, APRIL 27: Clean up around the children's playground and labyrinth, trim bushes around the parking lot, minor tree trimming, among other projects. Contact Steve Robinson at slraggie@gmail.com if you would like to participate. Rakes, leaf blowers, hedge trimmers, etc. will be provided. Need willing volunteers to supply labor of love from 8am - noon.

Be a Greeter and Communion Steward: To help in the 9am and 11am services, please contact Worship Committee Chair Ryan Womack: worship@friends-ucc.org.

Youth Group Looking for Extra Help: We are still looking for volunteers to help with the Youth Group events for the new year, including the June Mission Trip. Contact Pastor Brooke at pastor-brooke@friend-ucc.org.

Sunday School Teachers Needed: Are you feeling called to teach our children or youth? Contact Pastor Dan for more information: pastor@friends-ucc.org.

Coffee Crew/Kitchen Angel: Do you enjoy having coffee/hot beverages available at Sunday morning services? Signup via sheet on counter in kitchen, or Sign-up Genius (link provided in Friday church email) or by contacting Fellowship@ friends-ucc.org. Training available by request.

Be a Curbside Steward: Recycling occurs once every two weeks early on Fridays and trash pick-up is weekly, early on Mondays. Bins need to be placed at the curb the afternoon or evening before the scheduled pick up day and returned to the side of the church after pick-up. Contact Property@Friends-ucc.org

Serve the Community: Help out at the Brazos Church Food Pantry, the Friday food distribution at Peace Lutheran, or Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network (BIIN) as an English or citizenship class tutor. And more! Visit the Friends Church website (Friends-ucc.org) ▶ **Get Involved** ▶ **Volunteer** or email office@friends-ucc.org for more information or to volunteer.

SAVE THE DATE

SPRING CLEANING WORKDAY, APRIL 27: Clean up around the children's playground and labyrinth, trim bushes around the parking lot, minor tree trimming, among other projects. Contact Steve Robinson at slraggie@gmail.com if you would like to participate. Rakes, leaf blowers, hedge trimmers, etc. will be provided. Need willing volunteers to supply labor of love from 8am - noon.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN, APRIL 28: Our stewardship campaign begins April 28 and runs until May 19 for Pledge Sunday! More details on how to support the church are coming soon!

FRIENDS CHURCH "ESTATE SALE" COMING NEXT SUNDAY!, APRIL 28: Our church-wide effort to clear out, clean up and reorganize our shared spaces will culminate in a chance for you to find a new home for items that we no longer use or have no place or need to store. Plan to "shop" after either service on Sunday, April 28, grab an item that strikes your fancy or holds sentimental value, and make a donation to support a special purchase for our church. Check out TW@F next week for details!!

FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS, MAY 3: First Friday with Friends is held in conjunction with Downtown Bryan's First Friday activities. We have a meet up at Blackwater Draw and always have a few people there for the 5:30-7:30 timeframe. Some folks stay at Blackwater all evening and others stop by on their way to or from dining and playing in downtown Bryan.

ASSEMBLING TEACHER APPRECIATION BAGS FOR CROCKETT ELEMENTARY, MAY 5: Please help us assemble treat bags to be delivered to staff at Crockett on Wednesday of that week to show our appreciation.

Friends Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Vision:

Rooted in the way of Christ, we strive to be a community of God's radical inclusion and extravagant welcome.

Mission:

United by the example of Jesus, we live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly.

Friends Church Staff

Senior Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon (*he, him*)
pastor@friends-ucc.org

Director of Music Ministries

Chris Hoffman (*he, him*)
choir@friends-ucc.org

Executive Pastor

The Rev. Trent Williams (*he, him*)
pastortrent@friends-ucc.org

Associate Pastor to Youth & Young Adults

The Rev. Brooke Dooley (*she, her, they, them*)
pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org

Administrative Assistant

Michael Rangel (*he, him*)
office@friends-ucc.org

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www.friends-ucc.org • Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00–3:00
Pastor Dan's weekday off is Friday. Pastor Trent's weekday off is Monday.