



Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



*"Annunciation to the Virgin Mary"
Jacopo da Pontormo, 1527-1528*

December 11, 2022

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.

NOTE OF GRATITUDE: The volunteers helping with today's worship services are Anne Nichols and Katy Stewart (lay leaders); and Victoria Junek and Brian Blake (greeters).

Worship service volunteers for next Sunday, December 18, are Tom Vogel and Lanette Schulte (lay leaders); and Katy Yeager, and Rick and Lanette Schulte (greeters).

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.

Third Sunday of Advent

Advent means 'Coming' in Latin. The four Sundays in Advent are observed in preparation for the coming nativity of Jesus, the Christ child. The Advent season is a time of expectant waiting for the celebration of Emanuel, 'God with us,' being born into the world at Christmas. It is also the beginning of the liturgical year in Western Christianity.

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

*CALL TO WORSHIP (BASED ON LUKE 1:46B-53) & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY

Pam & Cady Engler

One: Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God our Savior!
Holy mercy is for those who honor God from generation to generation!

All: **God has shown strength and has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.
God has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty."**

One: Today we light the third candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy.

All: **May we become people of contagious joy. Come, Lord Jesus!**

**HYMN FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE: Waiting for You

$\text{♩} = 110$

We are wait - ing for you, know-ing that you_

al-ways a-bide,___ we are wak - ing_ to your pres-ence

and our hearts are___ o - pen wide,

o - pen_ wide... o - pen_ wide.

**INVOCATION

Katy Stewart

**PASSING OF THE PEACE

Trent Williams

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

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 12:15-21 (NRSV)

Katy Stewart

When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, and he ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 42:1-9 (NRSV)

Trent Williams

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

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

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

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

INVITATION TO SHARE

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Church Office Giving at bit.ly/givetofriends

Text to give: Text **Friends** to 979-500-2523

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 & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Trent Williams

**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

Dan De Leon

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

****BENEDICTION**

Dan De Leon

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Pat-a-pan - Bernard de la Monnoye, arranged by Melody Bober
Offertory: Still, Still, Still - Traditional Austrian Carol, arranged by Thomas Keesecker
Postlude: Joy to the World - George Frideric Handel, arranged by Victor Labenske

Scriptures for Dec 18: Psalm 23:1-4; Matthew 1:18-25

GETTING CONNECTED AT FRIENDS

CONGRATULATIONS MORGAN!: We are pleased to announce that Morgan Leopold has accepted the position of Lead Child Care Worker effective immediately. Reporting to Pastor Trent, she will have responsibility over the childcare function. If you have a request for childcare services, please submit a request to Michael at office@friends-ucc.org.

THEOLOGY ON TAP RESUMES IN 2023: Theology on Tap, our monthly gathering beyond church walls at KinderHill Brew Lab for fellowship and informal theological conversation, is taking a break for December. T.o.T. will resume on Thursday evening, January 19, 2023, at 6pm. Mark your calendar, and we'll see you in the New Year!

11AM SERVICES ONLY ON CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS: Christmas Day and New Years Day fall on Sundays. For those sleepy holiday mornings, Friends Church will offer only one service at 11am. Two services on Sundays will resume in 2023 on January 8th at 9am and 11am.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT FRIENDS CHURCH – HAND BELLS, COMMUNION, & CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT: Beginning at 6:30pm on Christmas Eve, the hand bell choir presents a short pre-service concert of holiday music to usher in the mystery and wonder of the Christ Child’s birth. Then at 7pm, the Christmas Eve service of communion and carols by candlelight is offered. The service will also be live-streamed.

REQUEST A NEW NAME TAG: Our new name tags are available and can be picked up in the narthex. If you haven’t yet had a chance to request an updated version, you can do that here: bit.ly/friendsnametags.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS WITH WOMEN: Our next gathering is Wednesday, December 14, from 4:30 to 7:00 at The Topsy Trinket (211 W. WJB Pkwy, Bryan) www.thetipsytrinket.com. It’s a “come and go” event at a new local business where you can sip, snack, and shop!

PARENTS OF TEENS AND TWEENS: While our youth are celebrating the holidays at Brooke’s house, we will gather at our own celebration at RX Pizza (1664 Greens Prairie Rd, College Station). You can drop-off your youth and drive a short distance for fellowship and fun with other parents and families of teens and tweens.

“ADVENT CONSPIRACY” SERIES, MIDWEEK NIGHTS: The word ‘Ad-vent’ means “coming” in Latin, as in the coming nativity of Jesus. While the word ‘con-spiracy’ might sound cringey given the state of our world, it actually derives from the Latin word ‘conspirare,’ which means “to breathe together.” To conspire, by constructive definition, is “to act in harmony toward a common end.” On midweek nights in Advent, we gather at Friends Church toward the common end of preparing for Jesus’ birth. The Advent Conspiracy movement was started in 2006 by three pastors who were tired of coming to the end of yet another Advent season exhausted and sensing that they’d missed it: “the awe-inducing, soul-satisfying mystery of the incarnation.” They came up with the Advent Conspiracy and gave it four tenets: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All. From those pastors: “Advent Conspiracy is about the entire body of Christ at work in the world. As we worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all, something begins to happen that is greater than any single person, church, or denomination. As the Church, we are telling the story of Jesus to the watching world.” Don’t miss the last two in our four-week series of gatherings at 6:30pm on Wednesday, Dec. 14, and Tuesday, Dec. 20. For more information, contact Pastor Dan: [pastor@ friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@friends-ucc.org).

ANGEL TREE UPDATES: Friends Church you are amazing! 65 of 65 children currently in foster care in the Brazos Valley have been sponsored by your generous outreach. Please bring your wrapped and labeled presents to Friends and put them under the trees in the narthex. You may do so after today’s services, during church office hours (9am-3pm, Mon-Fri), and these drop off times: Today, Dec. 11, 3-6pm, or Monday, Dec. 12, 3 -6pm. Delivery to the CPS office will be Tuesday morning. If you have other questions, please contact Mary Howell (979-219-8007) or Anne Wehrly (979-220-0714).

FRIENDS CHURCH BOOK CLUB WILL RESUME IN JANUARY: The Linda Coats Book Club meets on the last Thursday of every month. In 2023, the theme will be “spiritual memoirs”, with our first book being *Take This Bread* by Sara Miles. February’s book will be *Brother to a Dragonfly* by Will D. Campbell. All are welcome!!! For questions or information, contact the Spiritual Life Committee at spirit_develop@friends-ucc.org.

PASTOR DAN LEADS MLK BOOK STUDY AT LINCOLN CENTER: Coretta Scott King wrote that “if there is one book [my husband] Martin Luther King, Jr. has written that people consistently tell me has changed their lives, it is Strength to Love.” At 6:30pm on the Wednesday evening after MLK Day, January 18, 2023, the Lincoln Center offers an informal study of Dr. King’s 1963 book, Strength to Love, that Coretta Scott King says, “best explains the central element of [his] philosophy of nonviolence: His belief in a divine, loving presence that binds all life.” Our own Pastor Dan will lead the book study and discussion that is free and open to the public. Copies of Strength to Love are available to purchase at the Lincoln Center, 1000 Eleanor Street in College Station, for \$12.

ADVENT MIDDAY LUNCHEON RECITALS HAVE RETURNED!: Need a mid-week holiday pick-me up? Join us at Friends for a series of Advent Midday Luncheon Recitals, every Wednesday at noon during Advent (December 14, and 21). Bring your lunch and enjoy some fellowship, followed by performances of Advent and Christmas music performed by our talented members of Friends Church’s Music Ministry. COVID stopped these performances from happening for the past two years, and we are excited to be able to bring these back. We hope you can join us for fellowship and music, which will help keep you in the holiday spirit.

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE, 12/21: Longest Night or Blue Christmas services provide space for all who might be experiencing loneliness, struggling with depression, or going through loss in whatever form during the holiday season. Different life circumstances make joviality difficult for many in our congregation and community. Recognizing this reality and the need for safe, inclusive space where solace and healing can breathe, a Longest Night Service will be offered at Friends Church at 6:30pm on Winter Solstice, Wednesday, Dec. 21. The service will move from shadows to illumination as we pray, sing, share scriptures, light the Advent candles, and hold space for one another and all needing comfort on the longest night of the year.

MORNING MEDITATIONS FOR ADVENT: On Tuesdays during the four weeks of Advent, you are invited to the Friends Church sanctuary to start your morning with centering meditation. At 7:30am on Tuesdays, Dec. 13, & 20, we gather for a brief introduction, followed by silent meditation, and follow-up conversation as time permits. Start to finish, this lasts between 35 and 45 minutes, hopefully allowing for those of us with work, school, and other obligations to get where we need to be on time. We are excited about this series of morning meditations that will bring us together in self- and community-preparation for the coming of Emanuel, God-With-Us, on Christmas. All are welcome.

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

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The Rev. Trent Williams (*he, him*)
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Associate Pastor to Youth & Young Adults

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