



**Friends Church**  
*An Open & Affirming Congregation*



*Get Thee Behind Me, Satan!*  
James Tissot Moyers (1886-1894)

February 25, 2024  
11:00am  
New Member Sunday

## 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: Ann Wild & Diane Simpson  
Greeters: Megan Alevar & Alex Cannon

Next Sunday, March 3  
Lay Leaders: David Manuel & Mo Bertrand  
Communion Stewards: Mary Johnson & Kathy Miller  
Greeters: Eli Vasquez & Jodie Robinson

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](mailto: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.

## *Second Sunday in Lent*

Lent, from the Latin *quadagesima*, ‘fortieth,’ is a penitential season of preparation for Easter commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert and enduring temptation before beginning his public ministry. In Western churches, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, six and a half weeks before Easter, and is marked by fasting, prayer, charity, and self-reflection on our discipleship with Christ.

### **PSALM FOR MEDITATION:** Psalm 22:23-31, NRSV

You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him. From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

### **QUOTES FOR MEDITATION:**

“The Christian faith is centered in one who was born in a manger and who died upon the cross. This is really the course of the Christian transvaluation of all values. The Christian knows that the cross is the truth. In that standard he sees the ultimate success of what the world calls failure and failure of what the world calls success.”

—Reinhold Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History*, 1937

“The cross, as a locus of divine revelation, is not good news for the powerful, for those who are comfortable with the way things are, or for anyone whose understanding of religion is aligned with power...This reversal of expectations and conventional values is the unmistakable theme of the gospel.”

—James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 2011

### **CHIMING OF THE TRINITY**

### **WORDS OF WELCOME**

Trent Williams

### **PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES**

## \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Diane Simpson

One: Do not be afraid to answer the call to discipleship.

**All: What does the call require?**

One: Letting go of our life as we know it. Following the way of the cross.  
Aligning our soul with God's.

**All: We step out in the way of Jesus by losing our life to save it.**

One: Do not be afraid to walk in the way of Jesus.

**All: We answer the call, unashamed and unafraid. Amen.**

## \*OPENING HYMN #204 "Take Up Your Cross," the Savior Said

Tune: Deus Tuorum Militum

## \*INVOCATION

Diane Simpson

## 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 #525 "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

Trent Williams

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Trent Williams

**Timeless One, we are so focused on the short-term that we forget You have carried our ancestors and You carry us.**

**We are focused on the next election, the next paycheck, the next shoe to drop.**

**We are afraid of the unknown and yet You have not abandoned us.**

**You call us back to You, time and again.**

**May we hear Your call in our hearts to turn away from the fleeting satisfaction of worldly wealth and gain.**

**May we be moved by Your call to work for justice and peace beyond today but also for future generations.**

**May we be driven by You to care for Your earth that You entrusted to us.**

**Call us to listen and feel where You are nudging us to move and act in ways that build up Your reign on earth, a reign that is eternal. Amen.**

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Trent Williams

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: **And also with you!**

## HYMN OF RESPONSE #409 I Heard My Mother Say

Tune: Give Me Jesus  
(verses 4, then 3)

## EPISTLE READING

Romans 4:13-25, NRSV

Diane Simpson

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness."

Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

**CHORAL ANTHEM:** When I Survey the Wondrous Cross - Gilbert M. Martin (Based on the tune by Lowell Mason)

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;  
love, so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all! Amen!

## GOSPEL READING

Mark 8:31-38, CEB

Dan De Leon

Then Jesus began to teach his disciples: “The Human One must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and the legal experts, and be killed, and then, after three days, rise from the dead.” He said this plainly. But Peter took hold of Jesus and, scolding him, began to correct him. Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, then sternly corrected Peter: “Get behind me, Satan. You are not thinking God’s thoughts but human thoughts.”

After calling the crowd together with his disciples, Jesus said to them, “All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me and because of the good news will save them. Why would people gain the whole world but lose their lives? What will people give in exchange for their lives? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this unfaithful and sinful generation, the Human One will be ashamed of that person when he comes in the Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

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

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

## THE MESSAGE

Dan De Leon

## MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

## INVITATION TO SHARE

Diane Simpson

## OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at [bit.ly/givetofriendsucc](https://bit.ly/givetofriendsucc)  
Venmo to 979-307-8860 or @friendsucc

## \*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

## **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Trent Williams

**Our Beloved Creator who lives in all creation,  
may your Divine Design unfold in our midst  
even as it does on the higher plane.  
Give us this day our daily nourishment.  
Forgive us when we hurt ourselves and when we hurt each other,  
that we would forgive ourselves and forgive each other.  
Lead us when we enter challenges and tests,  
when we are dominated by parts of ourselves,  
inside and outside ourselves  
that cause us to drift toward evil and forget our true nature.  
May we remember our true nature as one with you,  
as one with all.  
May we know the power and the radiance  
of the one beyond space and time.  
So bet it!**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trent Williams

## **SERVICE FOR THE RECEIVING OF NEW MEMBERS**

### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

Ethan Boyles, Julie Colicchio, Clarissa Kennedy, Caleb Klemt, Kathleen Martin,  
Abigail Moody, Elaina Sawyer, J. Watts

### **QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES**

### **FRIENDS CHURCH COVENANT (UNISON)**

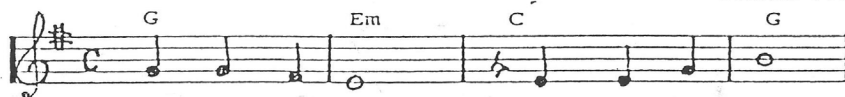
**We recognize that we were strangers, that we came from diverse backgrounds,  
that we share a longing for acceptance and a need for mutual support — we  
need to celebrate our love of God with joy, enthusiasm, and faith. In faith we  
gather as Friends Congregational Church to experience community, to  
celebrate old traditions, and to affirm our new creations. Looking outward, we  
recognize the need to embrace the world and to invite others to share mutual  
gifts. Our spiritual journey is sustained by the God of Biblical history as  
expressed by Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and most clearly by Jesus of  
Nazareth. We celebrate the continuity of our faith and live in its mystery.**

## \*\*WELCOME & RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS (UNISON)

We welcome you with joy into the common life of this church. we promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus the Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen savior.\*\*

## SIGNING OF THE MEMBERSHIP BOOK

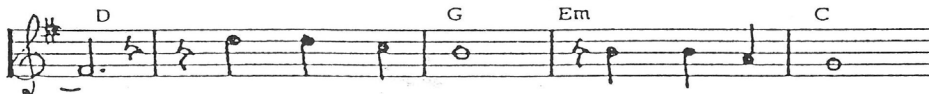
### CLOSING HYMN No Longer Strangers



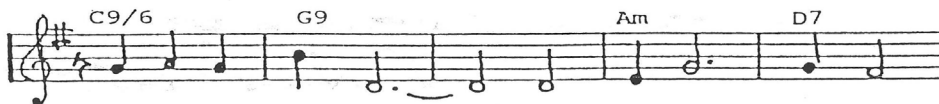
1. He turned to say: "Come fol-low me."
2. I walked a-lone. I heard your cry.
3. My world was small, my neigh-bors few,
4. No fo-er-ign kind, no al--ien race,



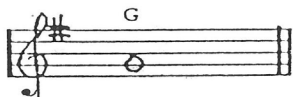
1. I joined his band to trav-el land and sea.
2. I came to you in--stead of pass--ing by.
3. But now God's love gives me a larg--er view:
4. In Christ we all have found a wel--come place.



1. And so we go to whom he sends,
2. We gave, we took; our sto-ry ends:
3. Be--fore the cross my world ex--tends...
4. The Spi--rit binds, our voic-es blend.



No long-er strang-ers, we're sis-ters, broth-ers,



friends.



**\*CHORAL BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

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**Instrumental Music:**

Prelude: Beneath the Cross of Jesus - Frederick C. Maker, arranged by Ruth Elaine Schram

Offertory: In the Cross of Christ I Glory - Ithamar Conkey

Postlude: Clouds (from “Songs Without Words”) - Felix Mendelssohn (Ruthie De Leon, piano)

Scriptures for Third Sunday in Lent, March 3, 2024: Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

**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](mailto:office@friends-ucc.org).

**EVENTS THIS WEEK**

**LENTEN MORNING MEDITATION, FEB 27:** On Tuesdays during Lent, you are invited to the Friends Church sanctuary to start your morning with centering meditation. At 7:30am on Tuesdays, Feb. 27, Mar. 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th, 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 Easter.

**“BROKEN”: REAL LIFE AND REAL FAITH, FEB 27:** On Tuesdays during Lent, we will gather in the sanctuary at 6:30pm to watch episode 3 of the 2017 BBC drama series “Broken” and have conversation about how faith and real life intersect. Even if you can’t make every week, you are welcome to attend, and can view the episodes you might have missed on Amazon Prime or Brit-box. Please be advised that the themes can be intense, including suicidal ideation and the intersection of race and police violence. This week we will view episode 2. Contact Pastor Trent if you have any questions.

**LENTEN MIDDAY RECITAL SERIES, FEB 28:** Join us for a series of Lenten Midday Recitals, featuring the talents of our wonderful musicians of Friends Church! Bring your own lunch for fellowship beginning at 11:30 am, and stay for a 20-30 minute program, beginning at 12:00, of music selected by our gifted musicians. A variety of music - sacred, musical theatre, classical, and pop - will be performed each week. Recital dates include February 28, and March 6, 13, and 20. We hope you can take time out from these busy weeks to relax and enjoy great music.

**LINDA COATS BOOK CLUB, 2/29:** JOIN US on February 29, as we discuss the book What Makes You Come Alive - A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman by Lerita Coleman Brown. We meet at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. All are welcome. For questions or more information, contact the Spiritual Life Committee.

**FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS, 3/1:** 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.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PASTOR BROOKE IS AWAY FEBRUARY:** Pastor Brooke will be out of the country February 7-29. If you have a pastoral need you can reach out to Pastor Trent or Pastor Dan.

**WALL OF GIVING:** The youth group will hold a Wall of Giving fundraiser every Sunday in February (before & after both services) in the fellowship area of the sanctuary. The Wall of Giving is a display with 100 envelopes marked with dollar amounts from \$1 to \$100. Those who wish to participate in the fundraiser will select an envelope based on the amount they want to contribute. That amount can be paid either with cash, check or via Venmo (to 979.307.8860 or @friendsucc) with a note that specifies that the money is for the 'Youth Mission Trip.' Inside the envelopes, and in exchange for the contribution, the youth are offering 'I Owe You's' (Ex. One postcard from the mission trip or one selfie from the mission trip). As always, thank you for your support of our youth group!

**REALM UPDATES:** We have successfully moved all membership and giving data to our new directory system in Realm. If you haven't yet logged in, just reach out to the church office and we'll send you login information. Next week, an automated email will be going out notifying you about a privacy setting change. This simply means that the church directory is now accessible and viewable by church members and active participants. It is the same setting that was in place with Church Office Online, our previous directory. Your information is secure and accessible only within the Friends Church database behind a login. For more information, see the Realm user guide on the Church Directory page of the church website under the Resources tab or reach out to the church office.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND SHARE

**CROCKETT ELEMENTARY BOOK FAIR:** Last year our free Book Fair at Crockett Elementary School in Bryan was a great success. Each child received three books to keep. Even the teachers were able to pick two books for themselves. We are doing it again this spring, so it's time to collect books! 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. Contact Jodie Robinson (jocelin-brune@gmail.com) or Pam Engler (penglertx@gmail.com). Thank you!

**VOLUNTEER VOICES NEEDED FOR FRIENDS CHURCH PODCAST:** Our new weekly podcast, featuring the messages from Sunday worship services, is introduced by Friends Church members giving a brief testimony of what Friends Church means to them. To volunteer to introduce an episode, contact A/V Tech Jeremy Dudo at [av@friends-ucc.org](mailto:av@friends-ucc.org).

**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](mailto:worship@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](http://Friends-ucc.org)) ▶ Get **Involved** ▶ **Volunteer** or email [office@friends-ucc.org](mailto:office@friends-ucc.org) for more information or to volunteer.

**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](mailto:pastor-brooke@friend-ucc.org).

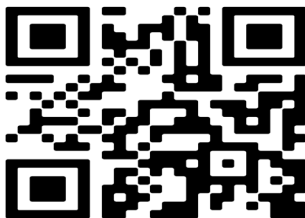
**Sunday School Teachers Needed:** Are you feeling called to teach our children or youth? Contact Pastor Dan for more information: [pastor@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@friends-ucc.org).

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

## SAVE THE DATE

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING, MARCH 3:** On March 3, Friends Church will celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing, one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. Scan the QR Code for more details. Please bring a donation to the service on this date or give online through our website (select “Giving”, “Make a Donation”, and choose “SCC One Great Hour of Sharing” in the “Fund” drop-down menu). Join us as we Share the Light with our global community!



**GUYZ BREAKFAST:** Guyz Breakfast brings together fellowship, fun and great food. Join us at the church on the second Saturday of the month 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. Bring your favorite breakfast food or drink to share. Pancakes and coffee are provided.

# Friends Congregational Church United Church of Christ

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## 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