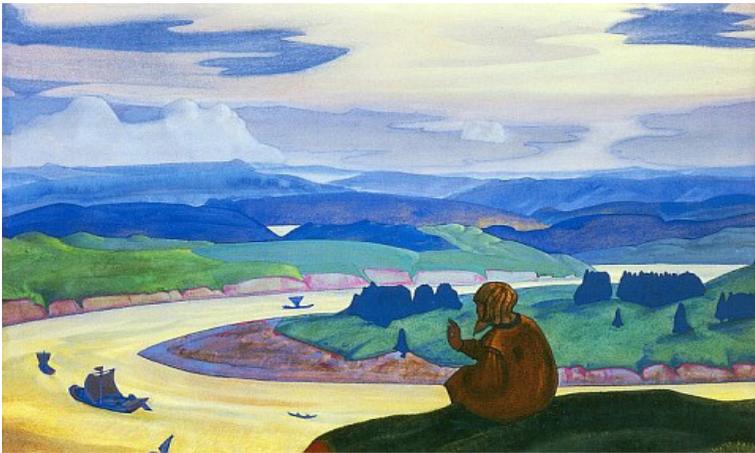




# Friends Church

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*



*"Procopius the Righteous Praying"*  
*Nicholas Roerich, 1914*

December 04, 2022  
9:00am & 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 Susan Fontaine and Holly Scott (lay leaders); Chris and Kate Abbott, and Becky and Charlie Burks (communion stewards); and Jacque Halverson and Tim Scott (greeters).

Worship service volunteers for next Sunday, December 11, are Anne Nichols and Katy Stewart (lay leaders); and Victoria Junek and Brian Blake (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](mailto:worship@friends-ucc.org).

## *Second 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

Brooke Dooley

### PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP (BASED ON ISAIAH II:6-8) & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT

### CANDLE OF PEACE

Paula, Wolfgang, Noah, George Verdegaal (9am)  
LaNeece, Tammy, Liam, Lorelei, Tatum Marley (11am)

One: The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together;

**All: and a little child shall lead them.**

One: The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;

**All: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.**

One: The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,

**All: and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.**

One: Today we light the second candle of Advent, the Candle of Peace.

**All: May we become people of infectious Peace. 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

Susan Fontaine (9am)  
Holly Scott (11am)

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Brooke Dooley

*Children in the sanctuary are invited to come to the front, and children watching online are invited to get closer to their screen for the children's message. All are invited to sing a verse of "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 (oh let it shine)!**

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: **And also with you!**

**HYMN OF RESPONSE:** NCH #107 - Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Tune: Rejoice, Rejoice

**GOSPEL READING:** Matthew 5:13-16 (NRSV)

Susan Fontaine (9am)

Holly Scott (11am)

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

**CHORAL ANTHEM:** O Come, Emmanuel - Elaine Hagenberg (Andrew Nguyen, violoncello)

O come! O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine Advent here, and drive away the shades of night, and pierce the clouds and bring us light!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to Thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind all people in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease, and fill the world with Heaven's peace.

O rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to Thee, O Israel.

O come.

**HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING:** Esther 4:1-17 (Inclusive Bible)

Dan De Leon

When Mordecai heard about the decree, he ripped his tunic and put on sackcloth and ashes. Then, he paraded through the city, sounding loud and bitter shrieks, until he arrived at the front door of the Sovereign's Gate, though he was stopped there because no one was permitted to enter wearing sackcloth and ashes. The same thing happened in every province—no sooner had the imperial decree been read than every Jewish person in the province began mourning, fasting, weeping and wailing, and many of them put on sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther's attendants told her what was happening, she was overwhelmed with grief. She sent out clothes for Mordecai to wear instead of sackcloth, but he refused to wear them. Then Esther called Hathach, a eunuch assigned by the sovereign to attend her. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and ask why he was behaving in this manner.

Hathach went out to Mordecai, who was still in the public square in front of the Sovereign's Gate. Mordecai told him what happened to him, and about the bribe that Haman offered to the imperial treasury as payment for the destruction of the Jewish people. Mordecai also gave the eunuch a copy of the decree of extermination which was proclaimed in Susa, and asked him to show it to Esther so that she might know everything that had happened. He also asked the eunuch to tell Esther to go to the sovereign and plead the case of their people before him. ["Remember your humble origins," he said, "where I provided you with all you needed. Since Haman, who holds the second place in the empire, has asked the sovereign to kill us, implore YHWH to speak to the sovereign on our behalf and save us from destruction!"]

Hathach returned to Esther and told her what Mordecai had said. She returned the following message to Mordecai: "All of the emperor's attendants and people of the provinces know that anyone who approaches the sovereign in the inner court without being summoned faces one punishment—death—unless the sovereign spares her life by pointing the golden scepter toward her. I have not been summoned to the sovereign for the last thirty days."

When Mordecai heard Esther's reply, he wrote back the following response: "Don't fool yourself into thinking that, just because you are in the imperial palace, you will be the only Jewish person to escape. If you insist on remaining silent at this time, vindication and liberation will come to our people through another source, but both you and your family will surely die. Who's to say?—you may have come into the royal court for just this moment."

So Esther sent a message to Mordecai: "Bring together all the Jewish people in the Susa now and fast for me. Do not eat or drink, day and night, for three days. After that, I will go to the sovereign in defiance of the law. If I die, I die."

Mordecai went and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

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

WHERE I SAW GOD THIS WEEK & INVITATION TO SHARE

Ro Anderson (9am)  
Jenn Bacak (11am)

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Church Office Giving at [bit.ly/givetofriends](https://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

Trent Williams

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Kyle Riley, Trent Williams

THE 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 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 & INVITATION TO JOIN FRIENDS CHURCH

Brooke Dooley, Trent Williams

**\*\*CLOSING HYMN:** NCH #117 - Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates      Tune: Truro

**\*\*BENEDICTION**      Dan De Leon

## POSTLUDE

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### Instrumental Music:

Prelude:      Of the Father's Love Begotten - Plainsong, arranged by Thomas Keesecker

Offertory:      Winter Peace - Jim Brickman

Communion:      In the Bleak Midwinter - Gustav Holst, arranged by Dan Forrest Jr.

Postlude:      For Unto Us a Child is Born (Inspired by Händel's Messiah) - George Frideric Handel, arranged by Faye López

Scriptures for Dec 11: Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 12:15-21

## GETTING CONNECTED AT FRIENDS

**ANNOUNCING DECEMBER 4TH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:** Please make plans to stay following the December 4th 11:00 am worship service for an important Congregational Meeting. Our agenda includes a celebration of the retirement of our mortgage, a vote on the Bridge Budget (6 month Spending Plan for January 1 – June 30, 2023), meeting Kyle Riley, our new Member in Discernment, a presentation on becoming a Reproductive Freedom Church, and a vote to call Brooke Dooley as our first Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults. Please join us! We will provide yummy snacks and childcare. This meeting will also be offered virtually.

The Zoom link is here: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87438224852>.

Meeting ID: **874 3822 4852**

**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!

**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](http://bit.ly/friendsnametags).

**FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN:** Please go to our survey at <https://forms.gle/94Uecmt4HuutniRW6>. Survey will close December 5.

**“ADVENT CONSPIRACY” SERIES, MIDWEEK NIGHTS IN ADVENT:** The word ‘Advent’ means “coming” in Latin, as in the coming nativity of Jesus. While the word ‘conspiracy’ 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.” In a four-week series of gatherings at 6:30pm on Wednesdays, Dec. 7 & 14, and Tuesday, Dec. 20, we will watch a brief video and then have conversation around each evening’s topic—Spend Less, 12/7; Give More, 12/14; Love All, 12/20—followed by a time of prayer. For more information, contact Pastor Dan: [pastor@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@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.

**PRIDE CENTER PARENT GROUP:** Pride Community Center facilitates a newly formed support group for parents of LGBTQ+ individuals on December 5th from 6-7pm. Parents, family, friends, and significant others are welcome to join in discussion on how to support each other and provide safe and affirming space for the LGBTQ+ people in our lives. Future sessions will be the first Monday of every month. Please send an email to [info@pridecc.org](mailto:info@pridecc.org) or call 979.217.1324 for location information.

**CHILDREN- & YOUTH-LED CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:** We will have a dress rehearsal the Saturday prior to the pageant on December 10th from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm; the participants with speaking parts should show up at 10:00 am, this does not include the Herald Angels nor the Barn Animals. The Heavenly Hosts (Angels), are invited to join

us at 11:00 am for the full dress rehearsal. The Barn Animals are optional; we want you to do what is best for you and your child. We have barn animal costumes (sheep, cow, donkey, etc) however your child can wear their own costume. In the past, we have had dinosaurs, unicorns, and ninja turtles. ALL ARE WELCOME! We should be done with the run-through and serving lunch by 12 noon (grilled hotdogs for lunch, with a vegetarian option available) and have your child/youth ready to be picked up by 12:30 pm. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Morgan Leopold, [mrleopold@verizon.net](mailto:mrleopold@verizon.net), or Tami Dudo, [tami.dudo@gmail.com](mailto:tami.dudo@gmail.com).

**CALLING ALL STAGEHANDS!:** Friends and parents, if your child/youth is in the play, support their hard work by helping us set up props, organize costumes, and arrange the chairs on Saturday, December 10th at 9:00 am. Once the pageant is over, we'll need help putting everything back on December 11th.

**THE FRIENDS CHURCH ANGEL TREE IS IN FULL SWING!:** This is a way that Friends can bring joy to children from around the Brazos Valley. The Justice and Mission committee has been in touch with the Brazos County Child Welfare Board to find 65 children for Friends folk to sponsor. These are all children who have been removed from their homes and are in foster care at this time. You may choose your sponsored child in person on Sunday after worship. Someone will be in the narthex by the poster for in-person sign-up. You will receive a wish list for each child as well as instructions on what to do next. You may also sign up virtually on the Friends website. There are 20 children waiting to be sponsored! We will also be accepting food and gas cards for our pastors to distribute to those in need in our community. Gift cards can be mailed to the church or put in the Gift Card box that will appear under the Christmas trees in the narthex. Contact [awehrly@suddenlink.net](mailto:awehrly@suddenlink.net) with questions.

**PARENTS OF TEENS!:** We will gather tonight at 5:30 (during Youth Group) in the Morning Manna Room. This is an opportunity to connect casually with other parents of teens and pre-teens and enjoy one another's company. Snacks will be provided.

**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. 6, 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.

**A NIGHT FOR REJOICING: FRIENDS CHOIR & CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CANTATA:** Join the Friends Choir and Chamber Orchestra for a Christmas Cantata, Thursday, December 8, 7:30 pm. These ensembles will perform “A Night for Rejoicing” by Lee Dengler and Susan Naus Dengler, featuring a variety of holiday tunes: Christmas favorites, familiar tunes with new words, as well as some new melodies. There will even be opportunities for the congregation to sing along. Come and enjoy the sounds of the season, and stay for a festive reception following the evening’s performance.

**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 7, 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.

**HELP CHANGING THE SIGN FOR ADVENT:** The messages on the church sign let passersby know who we are and what we’re all about at Friends Church. We often post pics of it on social media to reach even more people. For the last several weeks, a couple of volunteers have helped with this crucial ministry. With Advent upon us and Christmastide only days away, we’re in need of more help changing the messages on our sign. Note: While it is possible for one person to change the sign, it is ideally a two-person job. If you are interested in helping, contact Pastor Dan: [pastor@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@friends-ucc.org).

**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.

# 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

### Pastoral Intern

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

### Administrative Assistant

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