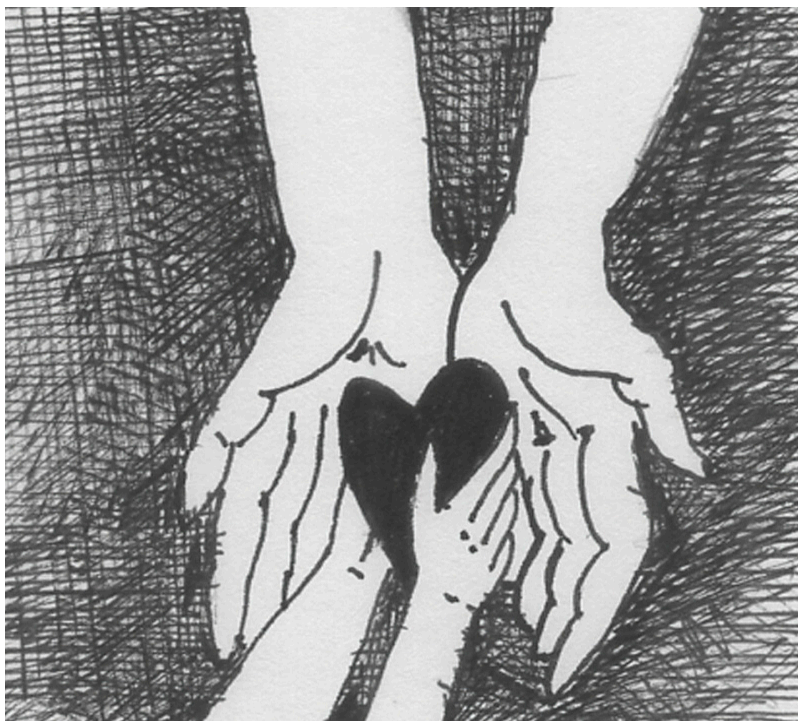




Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



My Heart for The Lord
Liz Valente (2021)

January 28, 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: Susan Fontaine & Holly Scott
Greeters: Maura Ives & Martha Newsome

Next Sunday, February 4:
Lay Leaders: Ann Wild & Kathy Miller
Communion Stewards: Mary Johnson
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.

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.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Epiphany is the Season of Light, when we remember the revelation of Jesus as the beloved Child of God, while recognizing the lengthening of the days and the growing of the light.

PSALM FOR MEDITATION: Psalm III, NRSV

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful. He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Holly Scott

One: We come to worship...

All: **Giving thanks with whole hearts
in the company of this congregation.**

One: We worship the One who is gracious and merciful...

All: **Holy and awesome is God's name!
Let us worship God together!**

***OPENING HYMN #304** All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Tune: Coronation

***INVOCATION**

Holly Scott

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 (oh let it shine)!**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Trent Williams

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (RESPONSIVE)

Trent Williams

One: God invites us to come to worship with our whole hearts,
to inventory our deeds and our works, mindful of our covenant with God.
God offers us a new beginning day by day and week by week.
Trusting in God, we pray for transformation and new life:

**All: Gracious and Merciful God, maker of covenant, faithful and just,
we examine our lives in light of your righteousness which endures forever.
You give us commandments,
raise up prophets among us from among our own people.
You speak to us, and ask us to become accountable.
Yet often we ignore your ways and disdain your works.
We close ourselves to your prophets and to the suffering in our world.
Forgive us and renew us,
that we may walk in faithfulness to you today, tomorrow, and all days.
Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF GRACE (RESPONSIVE)

Trent Williams

One: God's righteousness endures forever,
and God is mindful of God's covenant with us.
The promises of God's covenant of grace assure us
that this day and all days we can walk in renewed faithfulness,
as we witness good works, and follow God's call.

All: Thanks be to God, whose righteousness endures forever!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Trent Williams

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

*HYMN OF RESPONSE - Open the Eyes of My Heart

Tune: Open the Eyes

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of seven staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: "O-pen the eyes of my heart, Lord. O-pen the eyes of my heart; I want to see you; I want to see you; to see you high and lift - ed up, shin-ing in the light of your glo - ry. Pour out your pow-er and love as we sing 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly.' Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, I want to see you."

D A/C#
O-pen the eyes of my heart, Lord. O-pen the eyes of my heart;

G/B G D
I want to see you; I want to see you;

1 2
Dsus D A Bm
to see you high and lift - ed up,

G A
shin-ing in the light of your glo - ry. Pour out your

Bm Em7 D/E A
pow-er and love as we sing "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly."

D A/C#
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly.

Bm G Em/D D
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, I want to see you.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” Then the Lord replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.”

CHORAL ANTHEM: Angels Unaware - Pepper Choplin

People are around, they're around on the corner, people who have needs, who have need of care. Many who take time to be kind, have been kind to angels unaware.

People on the street, on the street we are walking, open up your eyes, you may see them there. Many who take time to be kind, have been kind to angels unaware.

Or is the stranger just a brother, just a brother of humanity? Or a sister who is tired, who is suffering inside, who needs healing in her soul, who needs healing in her soul? Brothers are around. Sisters are around.

People are around, they're around on the corner, people who have needs, who have need of care. Many who take time to be kind, have been kind to angels unaware.

If we open up our eyes and we try to be kind, showing love and care, it's like there are angels everywhere, everywhere.

GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:21-28 (CEB)

Dan De Leon

Jesus and his followers went into Capernaum. Immediately on the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and started teaching. The people were amazed by his teaching, for he was teaching them with authority, not like the legal experts. Suddenly, there in the synagogue, a person with an evil spirit screamed, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the holy one from God.”

“Silence!” Jesus said, speaking harshly to the demon. “Come out of him!” The unclean spirit shook him and screamed, then it came out.

Everyone was shaken and questioned among themselves, “What’s this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands unclean spirits and they obey him!” Right away the news about him spread throughout the entire region of Galilee.

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

Holly Scott

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 (UNISON)**

Trent Williams

Protecting God, may our lives mirror the story of Jesus,
who demanded a destructive spirit flee from a suffering person’s body.
Bless the ways we undo harmful stories in our bodies,
in our minds and in our communities.
Companion us as we make room for the Way of Love to flow. Amen.

*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 our 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

Dan De Leon, Trent Williams

*CLOSING HYMN #303 Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing

Tune: Darwall's 148th

*BENEDICTION

Dan De Leon

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name! - Oliver Holden, arranged by Marianne Kim
Offertory: Jesus, Name Above All Names - Naida Hearn, arranged by John F. Wilson
Postlude: Brethren, We Have Met to Worship - arranged by Joel Raney

Scriptures for Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, February 4, 2024: Psalm 147:1-11; Isaiah 40:21-31; Mark 1:29-39

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

FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS: The next First Friday with Friends is February 2nd. 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 5-7pm timeframe. Some folks stay at Blackwater all evening and others stop by on their way to or from dining and playing in downtown Bryan.

OWL (OUR WHOLE LIVES) SEXUALITY EDUCATION TRAINING THIS WEEKEND!: This weekend, January 26-28, Friends Church will be hosting a training for Our Whole Lives. OWL is a comprehensive sexuality education program developed by the UCC and the Unitarian Universalist Association. OWL empowers students with age-appropriate information related to human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, society and culture. As a collaborative effort between Friends, the UU Church of the BV, and community leaders, this training will prepare facilitators to teach 7th-9th and 10th-12th grade students. As a congregation dedicated to reproductive justice, accessibility to all, and being open and affirming to all gender and sexual identities, OWL is a great opportunity to support our youth. There is a lot that goes into planning a training, and we are still in need of funds to make this great program happen. If you would like to support the B/CS OWL initiative, follow the QR code below. Reach out to Pastor Brooke for more information.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

GIVING STATEMENTS 2023: The giving statements for 2023 are available now for pick up. This year, since we transitioned systems, there will be two statements: one for January to June from Church Office Online, and one for July to December, from Realm. Thank you for your generosity and support of the mission and ministry of Friends Church in 2023!

DEVOTIONAL BOOKS FOR LENT ARE HERE!: LENT begins Ash Wednesday, February 14th, 2024. Copies of the UCC's Lenten Daily Devotional booklet, BEND, are available for pickup in the Narthex; one per household, please. The electronic version (pdf) may be purchased individually at thepilgrimpress.com.

LEAVING A LEGACY: PLANNED GIVING WORKSHOP: You are invited to join us for a Planned Giving Workshop after the 11:00 worship service on February 4. Lunch will be provided, and we will learn about how to remember the church in your will or estate plans, ways to make use of retirement assets, and answer your questions. All are welcome--even if you're not at retirement age yet, this can be valuable learning as you think about planning for the future. You can sign up to let us know you'll be coming here: <https://bit.ly/friendsplannedgiving>.



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. If you have questions, please contact Jodie Robinson (jocelinbrune@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.

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? 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. 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

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP FOR SPRING BREAK MISSION TRIP: It's not too late. You can still join our group of Friends headed to the Texas/Mexico border March 10 - 13. Plans are underway to visit immigration court, interact with Border Patrol agents, volunteer at a respite center, and visit an outdoor encampment for asylum seekers in Matamoros--all with the intent to bear witness to the realities beneath the rhetoric. If you would like to participate, contact Cecelia at programs@friends-ucc.org

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION: THE THEOLOGY OF REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE, 2/11: For many of us, reproductive freedom is not only a political concept, it is a religious one. Friends Church is hosting a speaker on February 11 who will help us explore the intersection of our faith and issues of reproductive justice. Plan to join us in person (registration encouraged) and to share this opportunity with your friends and colleagues. Register with the QR code below



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*)
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