



Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



"Three Temptations"
Cara B. Hochhalter (2019)

February 26, 2023

9:00am

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: Thank you to the volunteers helping with today's worship services:

Lay Leaders: Kate Abbott

Greeters: Jon Maxwell

Next Sunday, March 5:

Lay Leaders: Susan Fontaine & Cathy Hanson

Greeters: Megan Yeager & Lanette Schulte

Communion Stewards: Jacque Halverson & Holly Scott

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.

First Sunday in Lent

Lent, from the Latin *quadragesima*, '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.

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 32, NRSV

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you. Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

"I hang onto the hope that, when people with privilege discover alternatives to life as they've known it--especially alternatives like the community of love Jesus inaugurated--they are better able to allow structures built for supremacy, domination, and empire to crack and to join in building something else."

-The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, *The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline, and New Hope for Beloved Community*

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Kate Abbott

One: We are pulled in many directions.

All: Duties and tasks seek to lay claim on our lives.

One: This day, in this place, may service to God be our choice.

All: This day, in this place, we open our hearts and spirits to God.

One: Blessed be the God of creation who has called us here.

All: Praise be to God who sustains and nurtures our lives.

***OPENING HYMN: Glory to God #544 Bless the Lord, My Soul** Tune: Bless the Lord

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.

The first system of musical notation is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. It features a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name."

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life.

The second system of musical notation continues the hymn in the same 4/4 time and B-flat major key. It features a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life."

CALL TO PRAYER

Brooke Dooley

One: Move among us, God; give us life;

All: Let your people rejoice in you.

One: Give us again the joy of your help;

All: With your spirit of freedom sustain us.

One: God, make our hearts clean,

All: Restore us in body, mind, and spirit.

One: Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Brooke Dooley

God our Creator, your kindness has brought us the gift of a new morning.
Help us to leave yesterday, and not to covet tomorrow
but to accept the uniqueness of today.
By your love, take from us what we need to carry no longer, so that we may be free
again to choose to serve you.

(Silent prayer and meditation)

SONG OF RESPONSE: NCH #409 - I Heard My Mother Say, v. 4

In the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise,
In the morning when I rise, give me Jesus.
Give me Jesus, give me Jesus,
You may have all this world, give me Jesus.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Brooke Dooley

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

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

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Kyle Riley

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Lanette Schulte

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 (oh let it shine)!**

HEWBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 (Inclusive Bible)

Kate Abbott

Then the Lord took the earth creature and settled it in the garden of Eden so that it might cultivate and care for the land. The Lord commanded the earth creature, “You may eat as much as you like from any of the trees of the garden—except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. You must not eat from that tree, for on the day you eat from that tree, that is the day you will die—yes, die.”

But the snake was the most cunning of all the animals that The Lord had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat from the trees in the garden?” The woman answered the snake, “We may eat fruit from all the other trees in the garden. But of the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘Don’t eat it and don’t touch it, or you will die.’” The snake said to the woman, “Die? You won’t die! God knows well that on the day that you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil!” The woman knew that the tree was enticing to the eye, and now saw that the fruit was good to eat—that it was desirable for the knowledge it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to the man beside her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 4:1-11 (CEB)

Dan De Leon

Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him. After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he was starving. The tempter came to him and said, “Since you are God’s Son, command these stones to become bread.”

Jesus replied, “It’s written, People won’t live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God.”

After that the devil brought him into the holy city and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him, “Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, I will command my angels concerning you, and they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.”

Jesus replied, “Again it’s written, Don’t test the Lord your God.”

Then the devil brought him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He said, "I'll give you all these if you bow down and worship me."

Jesus responded, "Go away, Satan, because it's written, You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him." The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him.

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

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

THE MESSAGE

Dan De Leon

SILENT REFLECTION: *One chime calls us into silence, and two chimes calls us out of silence.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LIGHTING OF CANDLES OF INTERCESSIONS

INVITATION TO SHARE

Kate Abbott

RECEIVING THE 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 Christ the Word in flesh born low,

Praise Holy Spirit evermore:

One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Brooke Dooley

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INVITATION TO JOIN FRIENDS CHURCH

Brooke Dooley

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Trent Williams

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Trent Williams

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.**

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING CUP

SHARING BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Trent Williams

Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Take us with you. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: #207 Just as I Am**

Tune: Woodworth

***BENEDICTION**

Dan De Leon

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Give Me Jesus - John Purifoy (Based on the traditional spiritual)

Offertory: What Wondrous Love Is This - John Carter (Based on “Wondrous Love” from Walker’s Southern Harmony, 1835)

Postlude: Lamb of God - Twila Paris, arranged by Lloyd Larson

Scriptures for March 5, 2023: Psalm 16:5-8; Romans 4:1-5; Matthew 20:1-16

GETTING CONNECTED AT FRIENDS

CHURCH DATABASE & DIRECTORY UPDATE: As we make the transition to our new database and directory system, you will be receiving an email soon, if you haven’t already, from Realm inviting you to login and claim your profile. This is a legitimate message, so feel free to follow the link. Once you’ve set up your password and login, you can edit your profile and access the church directory. Feel free to add a profile picture as well; if you would prefer that we take that photo, we can also do that for you. In addition, our online giving platform will also be shifting to Realm, so if you have a recurring gift set up through our current system, you will need to set that up again. More information will be shared about how to do that in the next couple of weeks. We are hoping to make the transition to the database fully by March 1. If you have any questions or run into any issues, please contact Pastor Trent at pastortrent@friends-ucc.org.

GUYZ BREAKFAST: Saturday, March 4, 8:30 – 10:00 in the Sanctuary. Bring your favorite breakfast item to share; coffee and pancakes provided. We’ve been having 10-12 participants and SO MUCH GOOD FOOD! Please join us!

SOCIAL JUSTICE CLASS: The Social Justice class currently meets at 10am in one side of the double classroom across from the office. Join us any Sunday for impromptu discussions of current events, and join us February 27th for a joint class with the high schoolers to dive into a sermon by Diana Butler Bass entitled “Mary the Tower.” As we work together to make sense of this world and God’s kin-dom, we welcome new perspectives and voices. We hope you consider joining us.

MORNING MEDITATION: Are you looking for quiet time during Lent? Please join us for morning meditation on Tuesdays during Lent at 7:30 am in the sanctuary. We will share readings and spend time in silence. Please join us for this special time.

GREETERS NEEDED FOR 9AM SERVICE: At Friends Church, we have a vision of being a radically inclusive community of faith that extends God's extravagant welcome to all. That's why having volunteers to greet folks when they walk in the church door is so important. Greeters are responsible for handing out worship guides, making a count of worship attendees, and helping take up the offering. Where greeters are most needed right now is in the 9am worship service. If you haven't worshiped at the earlier service on a Sunday morning, this would be a great opportunity to give it a try. To volunteer and get more information, contact Worship Committee Chair Ryan Womack: worship@friends-ucc.org.

FRIENDS GROUP THERAPY INFORMATION: A therapy group is currently being offered at Friends' Church. This group meets Monday evening from 6:00 – 7:30 and there are currently openings in the group. This group membership is limited to the congregation of Friends, although you do not have to be a member to participate in group. Attendance at each session is expected, barring an emergency. COVID vaccination is required to participate in this group. Appropriate issues for the group are depression, anxiety, grief, COVID response, relationship issues, and other issues that affect daily life. Group will be led by a board-certified psychologist who is also a member of Friends. There is no charge for this group. There is childcare available in the church nursery. Those who have more comprehensive issues, including suicidality, eating disorder, substance abuse, and other issues that would respond better to more intensive treatment should seek therapy in another setting. New members of the group may join after February 25, but you must speak with Maggie before joining. Questions? Interested, but want to know more? Please talk to Maggie Gartner at 979-777-3090 or email her at maggigartner68@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE! REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH WATCH: Join us on Sunday, February 26th from 3pm to 4:30pm at Friends as legislative policy analysts with Texas Impact in Austin explain reproductive health bills currently under consideration by the Texas Legislature, identify key players, and guide us in developing action steps people of faith can take to influence legislators on reproductive health issues during the 2023 Legislature. Faith leaders will share how our faith can inform our advocacy work for reproductive freedom. Sign-ups will be available for lobbying trips to Austin and local advocacy activities. Light refreshments and childcare will be provided. See the Facebook event <https://fb.me/e/2yc57MWKl> for more information.

HESED LECTURE SERIES: Friends Church has been invited to the Hased Lecture Series at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, March 4, 9:30-4:00 (transportation from church will be coordinated). There is no fee for participation and lunch is provided. Friends Church is providing transportation. Sign-up by Monday, February 27 by contacting Dwight Baker at Dwight.d.baker@gmail.com. The purpose of the Hased lectureship is to promote awareness and church involvement in the area of social justice, thus enabling hased, which is Hebrew for love in action. The featured speaker is Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray Jr., the Crump Visiting Professor and Black Religious Scholars Group Scholar-in-Residence at Seminary of the Southwest. He recently retired as the 13th President of Chicago Theological Seminary (a seminary related to the United Church of Christ). Find more information at <https://www.austinseminary.edu/lifelong-learning/lectures/hased>.

WHO IS JESUS TO YOU? The question examines our relationship with Christ during the season of Lent, the period between Ash Wednesday (Feb. 22) and Easter (Apr. 9). During Lent, as we remember Jesus' journey from suffering and death to resurrection and new life, we look inwardly and ponder our relationship with him. Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). And, as The Rev. Dr. Amy Butler, former pastor of the historic Riverside Church in New York, says, "We do not change unless we're in relationship." So, who is Jesus to you? What is that relationship like? What difference does that relationship make in your life, and, consequently, in the lives of others and the world we share? If you are interested in sharing a brief testimony responding to the question "who is Jesus to you," contact Pastor Dan for more info: pastor@friends-ucc.org. We hope to include a "Who Jesus is to Me" testimony each Sunday in worship during Lent. It is through the sharing of our stories and the relationships we have with each other that our community can be changed to be more like the Jesus we follow; the Christ who is in relationship with each one of us.

FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS DRIVE: Our drive last October was a big success and provided for many in need. In conjunction with the Justice & Mission Committee's focus on reproductive rights this month, Friends Church will again collect feminine hygiene products for distribution at the Brazos Church Pantry, a local non-profit providing food and other items to those in need in our community. Beginning Sunday, February 19th, you can drop your new donation items in the labeled boxes in the narthex and by the office. Smaller packages for individual distribution are preferred (as bulk cannot be divided) with an emphasis on liners and tampons. Collection continues through March 5th.

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*)
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