



**Friends Church**

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*



*"Ash"*

*Mike Moyers (2016)*

February 14, 2024

6:30 pm

Ash Wednesday Service & Imposition of Ashes

## WELCOME TO FRIENDS CHURCH!

We are honored that you have chosen to spend your Wednesday evening 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.

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).

## CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

### WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

### PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP (FROM PSALM 51:10-12, 6)

Grace Jackson

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

**All: and put a new and right spirit within me.**

One: Do not cast me away from your presence,

**All: and do not take your holy spirit from me.**

One: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

**All: and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

One: You desire truth in the inward being;

**All: therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

\*OPENING HYMN #454 Lord, I Want to be a Christian Tune: I Want to be a Christian

#### \*INVOCATION

Trent Williams

#### HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, NRSV

Trent Williams

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near— a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

“Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don’t make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won’t be applauding. When you do something for someone else, don’t call attention to yourself. You’ve seen them in action, I’m sure—‘playactors’ I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that’s all they get. When you help someone out, don’t think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out. And when you come before God, don’t turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for fifteen minutes of fame! Do you think God sits in a box seat? Here’s what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

“When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don’t make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won’t make you a saint. If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn’t require attention-getting devices. He won’t overlook what you are doing; he’ll reward you well. Don’t hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it’s safe from moth and rust and burglars. It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.”

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 CONFESSION**

Dan De Leon

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Dan De Leon

We repent, O God. We repent of our worldliness.

We repent of the systems and structures humanity has created that exploit others to create wealth for a very few.

We repent of the worldly measures of success that pit us against each other.

We repent of white supremacy that has manifested in our lives as privilege for those with lighter skin and oppression for those with darker skin.

We repent of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and all the ways we despise, hate, and reject our siblings in You.

We repent of genocide and colonization.

We repent of the mechanisms of wealth that create poverty, hunger, and homelessness.

We repent of our fears that stigmatize those with mental illness.

We repent of ableism.

We repent of our sin, our complicity in the systems around us.

We repent to our very bones, made of the stardust You created the universe with.

Wash our hearts, O God. Make us clean. Turn us back to You.

Transform our hearts to love with the love You have for us, O God.

In the name of Jesus, who bore the cross for us and calls us to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow him, we pray these things. Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Dan De Leon

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Trent Williams

## PRAYER FOR THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Trent Williams

## INVITATION TO THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Trent Williams

## \*IMPOSITION OF ASHES

\*HYMN OF RESPONSE #499 Pues si vivimos (In All Our Living) Tune: Pues Si Vivimos  
verse 1 in Spanish, and verses 1 & 2 in English

**\*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Trent Williams

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LIGHTING OF CANDLES FOR INTERCESSIONS**

Trent Williams

**PASTORAL PRAYER & 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.**

**\*BENEDICTION**

Dan De Leon

**(DEPART IN SILENCE)**

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**THEOLOGY ON TAP, FEB 15:** At 6pm on February 15th, Theology on Tap (T.o.T.) is held at KinderHill Brew Lab, 800 S. Bryan Ave. T.o.T.'s informal discussions bring our lives more in tune with God's will and way as we get to know each other better beyond church walls. The venue has an assortment of great beers on tap. You don't need to be fond of beer to join us, nor do you have to be 21 or older. Non-alcoholic beverages are available, and minors are welcome, as are four-leggeds. Cheers, and amen!

**INQUIRE + CONNECT CLASS, FEB 18:** Are you wanting to learn more about Friends Church? Inquire + Connect is for you! Join us after February 18th's 11:00am service for the Inquire Class with lunch provided. At the Inquire Class you will learn about Friends—our history, our community, our opportunities for engagement—from church members and one of our pastors. The Inquire Class concludes with an invitation to participate in an optional follow-up Connect Class offered in the home of a church member. In the Connect Class you will learn more about the vision and mission of Friends Church, and how you can “connect” with our various opportunities for nurturing your spirituality, seeking social justice, and getting more involved in the life of our community of faith. For more information and to sign up for Inquire + Connect, email Spiritual Life Chair Becky Burks at [spirit\\_develop@friends-ucc.org](mailto:spirit_develop@friends-ucc.org)

**YOUTH LGBTQ+ CRAFT NIGHT, FEB 18:** Pride Community Center, Inc is honored to partner with Friends Congregational Church, UCC and other LGBTQ+ youth allied organizations in starting of 2024 with a LGBTQ+ Craft Night as part of our bimonthly series of activities for youth in 7th through 12th grades. Join us February 18 at Friends as we have food, entertainment, and crafts done together to get to know each other and just have fun. Youth younger than 7th grade are welcome with a parent. Youth safety will be enforced. Please register to attend so that we can get an accurate count for food provided. <https://bit.ly/Feb2024CraftNight>

**“BROKEN”: REAL LIFE AND REAL FAITH, FEB 20:** Join us for a special Lenten series centered around the 2017 BBC drama series “Broken,” on Tuesdays in Lent at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. Over six weeks, we will watch an episode of the series and have conversation about how faith and real life intersect. Participants are encouraged to make each session if possible, since the series builds on each previous episode. Please be advised that the themes can be intense, including suicidal ideation and the intersection of race and police violence. Contact Pastor Trent if you have any questions.

**LENTEN MIDDAY RECITAL SERIES, FEB 21:** 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 21 and 28, and March 6, 13, and 20. We hope you can take time out from these busy weeks to relax and enjoy great music.

**WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY WITH WOMEN, FEB 21:** Typically we meet on the second Wednesday of the month. However, for February, the second Wednesday falls on Ash Wednesday and there will be a service and soup supper at the church that evening. Therefore, we will meet on Wednesday, February 21 instead. We'll meet at Vino Boheme (206 W 26th St, Bryan)

**FABULOUS AT ANY AGE LUNCH AND CRAFTS IN DOWNTOWN BRYAN, FEB 23:** Fabulous at Any Age (and who isn't????) is lunching and crafting in downtown Bryan on February 23. We'll meet at 12:30 at Elia Café Tapas Bar (202 S. Bryan Ave) for lunch (on your own) and then move to Brazos Glassworks (202 W. 26th St.) to make stained glass suncatchers. Cost for lesson and supplies is \$25).

**NEW MEMBER SUNDAY, FEB 25:** On February 25, we welcome our newest members into the life of Friends Congregational Church. If you are interested in joining Friends Church on New Member Sunday, please contact Senior Pastor Dan De Leon ([pastor@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@friends-ucc.org)), Executive Pastor Trent Williams ([pastortrent@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastortrent@friends-ucc.org)), or Associate Pastor Brooke Dooley ([pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org)).

# 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