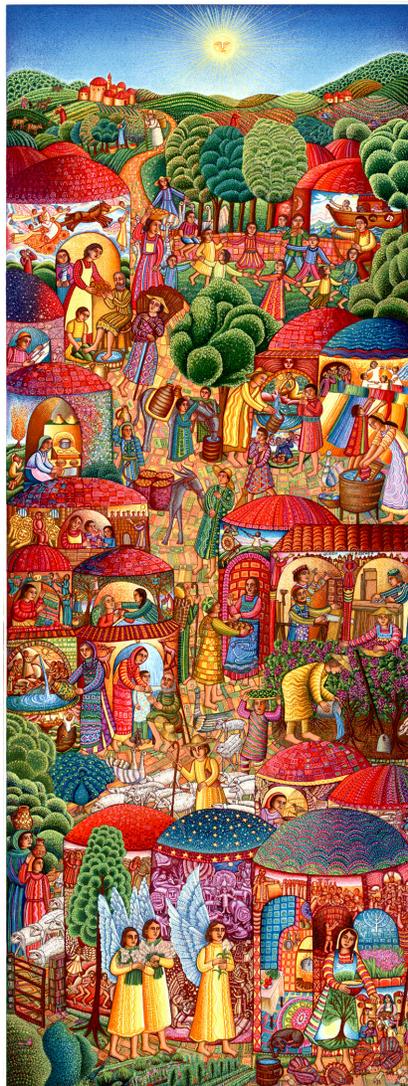




FRIENDS
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH

An Open & Affirming Congregation



Swanson, John August. *A Visit*. 1995.

December 26, 2021

11:00am

WELCOME

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 Sunday after Christmas

Christmas is not just a day; it is a season! Christmas Day is the festival commemorating the birth of the Christ Child, observed primarily on December 25 among billions of people around the world. The 12 days that follow are known as the Christmas season or Christmastide.

Words in **BOLD** are yours to speak out loud

****You are invited to stand**

Epistle Reading for Reflection: Colossians 3:12-17 (CEB)

Therefore, as God's choice, holy and loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be tolerant with each other and, if someone has a complaint against anyone, forgive each other. As the Lord forgave you, so also forgive each other. And over all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. The peace of Christ must control your hearts—a peace into which you were called in one body. And be thankful people. The word of Christ must live in you richly. Teach and warn each other with all wisdom by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing to God with gratitude in your hearts. Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him.

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Brooke Dooley

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

****CALL TO WORSHIP**

Brian Blake

One: To gather as Siblings in the Spirit,

All: To heal our childhood wounds,

One: To honor the boundaries of children,

All: To ask for forgiveness and to seek repair,

One: To demand a world where we prioritize each other's safety:

All: This is to practice Hope. This is to worship God.

****OPENING HYMN — The First Nowell - Tune: The First Nowell**

The First Nowell

1 The first Now-ell the an-gel did say was to cer-tain poor
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin-ing in the
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
 4 This star drew nigh to the north-west; o'er Beth - le -

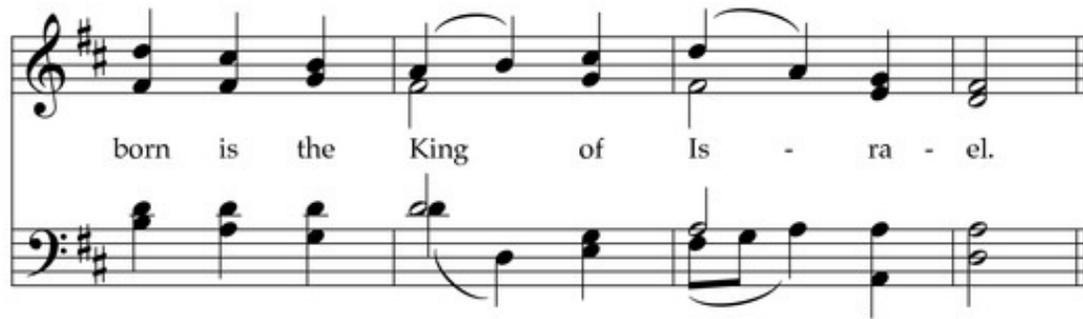
shep-herds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keep-ing
 east be - yond them far; and to the earth it gave
 came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was their
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop

their sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.
 great light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.
 and stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

Refrain

Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell,

"Nowell" is the English form of the French "noel," a shout of joy formerly used at Christmas (as in Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale"), a clue that the word is older than its first printing. It may have Latin and French roots related to "born" (*natus / nē*) as well to "news" (*nova / nouvelle*).



5 Then entered in those wise men three, 6 Then let us all with one accord
 full reverently upon their knee, sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
 and offered there in his presence that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
 their gold, and myrrh, and and with his blood our life hath bought.
 frankincense. *Refrain*

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Jackie Womack

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Tami Dudo

Children are invited to come forward with their masks on and sit at the front on a circle for distancing. Children at home are invited to get closer to their screens. All are invited to sing a verse of "Away in a Manger," hymn no. 124 in the hymnal, to begin the children's message.

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
 the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Brooke Dooley

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Gracious God, we have sought you in high and holy places; we are slow to notice your presence among the lowly and poor. We believe you are profound, but we overlook your obvious truths. We are anxious about the unknown, but we tune out what you are doing right in front of us. Turn us around, incarnate God, by the simple wonders of your love, to a rebirth of faith and hope and joy. Amen.

SILENT MEDITATION & PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Brooke Dooley

****PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: And also with you!

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)

Brian Blake

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

HYMN OF RESPONSE — Once in Royal David's City - Tune: Irby (vv 1 & 4)

Once in Royal David's City 140

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly

4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -

cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a

deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle is our

man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er

Lord in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren

mild; Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.

on to the place where he is gone.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal staff and a piano staff. The lyrics are: '1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly', '4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -', 'cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a', 'deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle is our', 'man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er', 'Lord in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren', 'mild; Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.', 'on to the place where he is gone.'

Like "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (see no. 20), this popular Christmas hymn was written by an Irish poet to illustrate for children the various articles of the Apostles' Creed. It is not known which of several English villages the composer had in mind when naming this tune.

PSALM READING—Psalm 96 (CEB)

Tami Dudo

Sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to the Lord! Bless his name!
Share the news of his saving work every single day!
Declare God's glory among the nations;
declare his wondrous works among all people
because the Lord is great and so worthy of praise.
He is awesome beyond all other gods
because all the gods of the nations are just idols,
but it is the Lord who created heaven!
Greatness and grandeur are in front of him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Give to the Lord, all families of the nations—
give to the Lord glory and power!
Give to the Lord the glory due his name!
Bring gifts!
Enter his courtyards!
Bow down to the Lord in his holy splendor!
Tremble before him, all the earth!
Tell the nations, "The Lord rules!
Yes, he set the world firmly in place;
it won't be shaken.
He will judge all people fairly."
Let heaven celebrate! Let the earth rejoice!
Let the sea and everything in it roar!
Let the countryside and everything in it celebrate!
Then all the trees of the forest too
will shout out joyfully
before the Lord because he is coming!
He is coming to establish justice on the earth!
He will establish justice in the world rightly.
He will establish justice among all people fairly.

HYMN OF RESPONSE — Hark! The Herald Angels Sing - Tune: Mendelssohn (vv. 1 & 3)

119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king.
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with the an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Brought together in the mid-19th century, the text and tune of this familiar carol began in quite different forms. The text had ten stanzas and began, "Hark, how all the welkin rings." The tune was created for a festival celebrating Gutenberg's introduction of moveable type.

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

GOSPEL READING – Matthew 2:19-23 (CEB)

Jackie Womack

After King Herod died, an angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. "Get up," the angel said, "and take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead." Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus ruled over Judea in place of his father Herod, Joseph was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he went to the area of Galilee. He settled in a city called Nazareth so that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled: He will be called a Nazarene.

HYMN OF RESPONSE — What Child Is This - Tune: Greensleeves (vv 1 & 3)

What Child Is This

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
3 So bring him in-cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.

Whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?
The King of kings sal-va-tion brings; let lov-ing hearts en-throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;
Raise, raise the song on high. The vir-gin sings her lul-la-by.

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar-y!
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar-y!

This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

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

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

HYMN OF RESPONSE — Angels, from the Realms of Glory - Tune: Regent Square (vv 1 & 4)

143 Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er

4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,
all the earth; you, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing
now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
to the e - ter - nal Three in One:
come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the final system.

This familiar carol was first published as a poem in the Christmas Eve 1816 issue of a newspaper the author edited in Sheffield, England. The tune name celebrates the location of a prominent Presbyterian Church in London, sometimes called the "Presbyterian cathedral."

INVITATION TO SHARE

Brian Blake

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Church Office Giving at bit.ly/givetofriends

GivePlus Text to 833-421-0009

Venmo to 979-446-5746 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*)**

Brooke Dooley

As we offer our gifts to you, Holy One, may they join all creation in blessing and serving your people. Called to be your people, may we notice those who are forgotten and offer our lives and hearts to them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Brooke Dooley

****THE LORD'S PRAYER (*unison*)**

Brooke Dooley

**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.**

COMMUNITY LIFE THIS WEEK

Brian Blake

CLOSING HYMN — Joy to the World - Tune: Antioch

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heaven and na - ture sing,

and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing,

While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it "The Messiah's coming and kingdom." So "the Lord" here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: O Come, All Ye Faithful - John Francis Wade, arranged by Melody Bober

Offertory: Kling, Glöckchen - Arranged by Chip Davis

Postlude: Joy to the World - Arranged by David Lanz

Scriptures for January 2, 2022: John 1:1-18 (RSV)

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 bring to the baptismal font 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.

ONE SERVICE ONLY FOR THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, 12/26: The 9am service will not be offered on Sunday, December 26. Instead, all are invited to the one service offered at Friends Church that morning at 11am. We will enjoy a festive morning of lessons and carols for Christmastide. All are welcome.

ONE SERVICE ONLY FOR THE SUNDAY OF 2022: The 9am service will not be offered on the Second Sunday after Christmas, January 2. Instead, all are invited to the one service offered at Friends Church that morning at 11am. Pastor Trent will offer the Christmastide sermon as we usher in the new year together. All are welcome in person or online.

PASTORS' SCHEDULES FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Senior Pastor Dan De Leon is away Dec. 25-29 and Dec. 30-Jan. 4, and again Jan. 9-12 for a retreat for senior ministers of UCC congregations. Associate Pastor Trent Williams is away Dec. 25-26 and Jan. 3-6. Pastoral Intern Brooke Dooley is away Dec. 30-Jan. 5. During the only two-day window when there is not a minister available, Jan. 3-4, should you have an emergency requiring pastoral assistance, please contact Church Council Vice Moderator Jackie Womack: vice-moderator@friends-ucc.org.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION HOLIDAY SCHEDULE: The Friends-Peace Lutheran holiday food distribution will take place 4:00pm-6:00pm at Peace Church on December 30th instead of December 31st.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE FROM PASTOR DAN: Friends Church family, words cannot express how grateful I am for the kind recognition of the church staff, AV volunteers, and me in the worship services on December 19, and for the generous gifts presented to us all. As the supervisor for our ministerial and administrative staff, and as the pastoral leader of our childcare worker and AV volunteers, it means more than you know to me that you support each and every one of them with gracious appreciation. On behalf of the entire staff and our AV volunteers, I want to thank you for your graciousness, thoughtfulness, and support. I'm also personally thankful for your gift, as it will honor my family and me during the holidays and the New Year. Finally, as I said in the 11am service on December 19, we are only as good as the people we lead, and the Friends Church staff is blessed beyond measure to be leading all of you at Friends Church administratively, technically, pastorally, and every manner in which God calls and equips us to serve. Thank you.

FRIENDS YOUTH CAMPAIGN TO FORGIVE MEDICAL DEBT: Last summer, Friends Youth spent their week-long mission trip engaging in local service projects and learning about systemic injustice, one being medical debt in the United States. An estimated **43 million people in the U.S. are struggling with medical debt** (that number exceeds the population of Canada). Medical debt is also the **#1 reason people file for bankruptcy**. Friends UCC Youth is partnering with RIP Medical Debt to forgive medical debt in the Brazos Valley and other surrounding counties in Texas.

This is how it works. RIP Medical Debt buys portfolios of debt at a fraction of the cost, and the program benefits families whose incomes are 2x below the poverty level, whose debts exceed 5% of their income. **Every dollar donated eliminates \$100 in medical debt.** The campaign spans four months and we are looking to wrap up our campaign around Easter of 2022.

Together with other local faith communities, and a fundraising goal of \$30,000, we hope to wipe out \$3,000,000 in medical debt.

Check out our campaign page to be part of this movement!

<https://ripmedicaldebt.org/campaign/brazos-valley-medical-debt-forgiveness>

For more information contact Brooke Dooley at pastoralintern@friends-ucc.org

PASTOR DAN SPEAKING AT "RACE & FAITH FORUM": At 3pm on Saturday, January 15, CORG (Confronting Our Racism Group), a group of concerned community members united in their anti-racism work, presents a Race & Faith Forum at First United Methodist Church, College Station. The hybrid event (both in person and livestreamed) will address such topics as how racism has affected our religion, whether/how W.E.B. Du Bois' assertion that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line" exists today in B-CS, and how our interfaith community can expose, confront and dismantle institutionalized racism and white supremacy. Alongside Rev. Eleanor Colvin of First UMC, CS, Rev. Kiya Heartwood of the Unitarian Universalists of the Brazos Valley, and Rev. Ted Foote of First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, our own Pastor Dan De Leon will speak at this forum that is open to the public.

FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our Vision:

Rooted in the way of Christ, we strive to be a community of God's radical inclusion and extravagant welcome.

Our Mission:

United by the example of Jesus, we live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00am In-Person – 11:00am In-Person & Online

FRIENDS CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon *he/him/his*, Senior Pastor
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The Rev. Trent Williams *he/him/his*, Associate Pastor
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Chris Hoffman *he/him/his*, Director of Music Ministries
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