



Friends Church
An Open & Affirming Congregation



Awake to Wonder
Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

December 1, 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: Becky Burks & Linda Fitzwater
Communion Stewards: Mary Johnson & Holly Scott
Greeters: Carolyn Young & Doris Machinski

Next Sunday, Dec 8:
Lay Leaders: Kathy Miller
Greeters: Carolyn Young & Alex Cannon

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.

First 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.

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord! Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees. -Psalm 25:1-10, NRSV

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION: "We seek to live where God is, and our understanding of that evolves and changes all the time. This is consequential, for, as Jesus says, 'Come to me and you'll find rest.' We are not being offered sleep, but freedom." —Fr. Gregory Boyle

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Dan De Leon

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

*CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)

Linda Fitzwater

One: Can one be homesick for something you've never known?

All: **We are homesick for a just world,
for peace like rivers,
for the end of suffering.**

One: Yes, we are homesick—

All: **for joy that is contagious,
for nations that feel like neighbors,
and for hospitals that run empty.**

One: We are homesick for the world God promises.

All: **We are homesick, but we are on our way.**

One: God is here; still speaking, still creating.

All: **Let us worship Holy God.**

***OPENING HYMN FOR LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE -**
While We Are Waiting, Come

Waiting (verse 1 only)

1 While we are wait - ing, come;
2 With power and glo - ry, come;
3 Come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come;

while we are wait - ing, come.
with power and glo - ry, come.
come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come.

Je - sus, our Lord, Em - man - u - el,

while we are wait - ing, come.

***INVOCATION**

Linda Fitzwater

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Tami Dudo

Children in the sanctuary are invited to come to the front. 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.**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Brooke Dooley

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Brooke Dooley

Gracious God, we find ourselves with two options every day:
to stay homesick for the world you had in mind, or to allow cynicism to win.
Do we hope against hope, or do we throw in the towel?
Do we insist on a better world, or do we assume it's impossible?
Forgive us for the days when cynicism wins.
Forgive us for numbing our homesick hurt instead of using it to fuel a better world.
Kindle in us a hope that won't let go.
Gratefully we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS (RESPONSIVE)

Brooke Dooley

One: Family of faith, even when we throw in the towel,
even when we give up on hope, God does not give up on us.
We are loved. We are claimed. We are invited closer to God's home.
So hear and trust this good news:
All: **There is room for us in God's house,
and nothing can separate us from that love.
We are claimed. We are forgiven. We are welcomed home.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

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

*HYMN OF RESPONSE: No. 122 Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

Stuttgart

EPISTLE READING

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13, NRSV

Linda Fitzwater

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

CHORAL ANTHEM - Veni, Veni Emmanuel - 9th Century Plainsong, arranged by Allen Koepke

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here.
Until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel,
come to Israel.

O come, desire of nations of like mind and bind in one the hearts of all mankind; bid thou
our sad divisions cease, and be Thyself, our Prince of Peace. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, O come, O come, Emmanuel!

GOSPEL READING

Luke 21:25-36, NRSV

Dan De Leon

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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

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

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

INVITATION TO SHARE

Linda Fitzwater

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at bit.ly/givetofriendsucc
Venmo to 979-307-8860 or @friendsucc

*DOXOLOGY

Praise to God, the One who made us. Praise to Christ, God's on - ly — Son.
the new* - born

4
Praise the Spir - it, ev - er — with us. Praise the God - head, Three in — One.

8
Clear a path! Pre- pare the way! Ad - vent leads to Christ - mas Day!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Trent Williams

Holy God, we are homesick. We long for the day that you spoke of when swords will be beaten into plowshares, the lion will lie down with the lamb, and justice will roll like waters. Until that holy day comes, take these gifts and use them to build that world here. We are hopeful. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brooke Dooley

*CLOSING HYMN - No. 112 Keep Awake, Be Always Ready

Wachet Auf

*BENEDICTION

Dan De Leon

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Once in Royal David's City - Henry J. Gauntlett, arranged by Rodney Abriol
Offertory: Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland (Savior of the Nations, Come) -
Based on a Plainsong Melody
Communion: Wachet Auf, Ruft Uns Die Stimme (Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying) -
Johann Sebastian Bach
Postlude: How Great Our Joy - Hugo Jüngst, arranged by Mary McDonald

Second Sunday of Advent, December 8, 2024: Luke 1:57-80; Philippians 1:3-11

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

FRIENDS ANGEL TREE UPDATE, DEC 3: Sponsor a child in person on Sunday after worship and every Sunday through Dec. 8. Sign up virtually on the Friends homepage. 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 on Dec. 1. Also, there will be a free gift wrapping for Angel Tree gifts Sunday Dec. 8th from 3-6 pm. Bring your gifts, Child Information sheet, and boxes (if needed) and gifts will be wrapped free of charge. Contact awehrly@suddenlink.net with questions.

ADVENT MEDITATION, DEC 3: On Tuesdays during Advent, you are invited to the Friends Church sanctuary to start your morning with centering meditation. At 7:30am on Tuesdays, Dec. 3, 10, & 17, 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.

FAA-LA-LA, DEC 4: FAA-LA-LA at the Advent Recital on Wednesday, December 4. Our Fabulous at Any Age group (which includes EVERYONE) is having a Christmas Singalong! Singing begins at noon. Let's meet at 11:30 for BYO lunch.

MIDWEEK ADVENT RECITALS ARE BACK, DEC 4: Needing time to pause and surround yourself by the sounds of the season? If so, join us each Wednesday in December (4th, 11th, and 18th) for a brown-bag lunch followed by a short musical program. Gather for food and fellowship at 11:30, and then stay for a 30-minute Recital of holiday music at noon, featuring the musical talents of our Friends Church musicians. We hope you can join us!

FAA - BRAZOS GLASSWORK CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY, DEC 5: Fabulous at Any Age (that's EVERYONE!) will be making glass ornaments at Brazos Glasswork on Thursday, December 5 at 2:00 p.m. No special art talent is needed! Signs ups are closed. Contact Kristen Harper at kristinsharper@outlook.com.

FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS, DEC 6: 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 5:30-7:30 timeframe. Some folks stay at Blackwater all evening and others stop by on their way to or from dining and playing in downtown Bryan.

FAIR TRADE CRAFT SALE, DEC 7 & 8: Get a jump on your Christmas shopping Saturday and Sunday (Dec. 7 & 8). Visit our annual Guatemalan Craft Sale held in the blue tent in the parking lot at Friends Church. UPAVIM (United for a Better Life) exports beautiful Fair Trade handmade gifts and crafts all around the world. Your purchases support educational and medical programs in the impoverished community of La Esperanza in Guatemala City. Come on Saturday Dec 7th from 10-2 or before or after church on Sunday Dec. 8th. In the event of inclement weather, the craft sale will move inside the church building.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRIENDS GREETERS NEEDED: Join our Friends Church greeter team! We are in need of additional folks to help welcome people on Sunday mornings and make our worship services flow smoothly. If you are interested in learning more, reach out to Worship Committee chair Charity Stokes at worship@friends-ucc.org. You can also sign up online here: bit.ly/FriendsGreeter.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED: We have all the Sunday school classes covered but are still looking for volunteers who could be called when teachers are out of town to be substitutes. Please let Pastor Dan or Abby Burley, Christian_ed@friends-ucc.org, know if we can add you to our list.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS ARE HERE: Advent begins Sunday 12/3! Copies of the UCC's Daily Devotionals booklet for Advent, THE MESS IN THE MESSIAH, are available for pickup in the narthex; one per household, please. The electronic version (pdf) may be purchased individually at thepilgrimpress.com.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND SHARE

SUPPORT OUR PODCAST: Help us spread the good word! Share this week's sermon with those you love with our "Friends Congregational Church Sermons" podcast, available wherever you can find podcasts! Easily access and publicize our mission to follow the model of Jesus: to live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly. With over 100 episodes published (since Advent of last year) we've expanded (since Eastertide this year) our efforts to include the wider library of sermons offered before this podcast kicked off. We would love to have your support by either showing this podcast to friends and loved ones, and/or contributing your voice to introduce an episode. Volunteers can reach out to av@friends-ucc.org (Jeremy) if interested, or you might get approached after service. Recording takes less than 10 minutes and is almost entirely scripted.

Be a Greeter and Communion Steward: To help in the 9am and 11am services, please contact Worship Committee Chair Charity Stokes: 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 school year. Contact Pastor Brooke at pastorbrooke@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: "All I need is coffee; all we need are volunteers to make it!" Sign up via sheet on kitchen counter, at bit.ly/friendschurchcoffee or email Jan at Fellowship@friends-ucc.org

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

ANGEL TREE GIFT DEADLINE, DEC 8: Please drop off your gifts for the Angel Tree by Monday, Dec 8 by 7:00pm. We will continue to collect gift cards and you can leave them in the gift card box under the tree or with Michael in the church office.

FRIENDS CHURCH'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CANTATA, DEC 12: The highly anticipated Friends Church Choir's Christmas Cantata will take place on Thursday, December 12, at 7:30 pm. This year, the Chancel Choir and Chamber Orchestra will collaborate to perform Elaine Hagenberg's moving Masterwork "Illuminare." As always, a wonderful reception will follow this magnificent service of worship through music. All are welcome. We look forward to celebrating the season with you!

GUYZ BREAKFAST, DEC 14: Guyz Breakfast brings together fellowship, fun and great food. Join us at the church on the second Saturday of the month 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. Bring your favorite breakfast food or drink to share. Pancakes and coffee are provided.

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*)
pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org

Administrative Assistant

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

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www.friends-ucc.org • Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00–3:00
Pastor Dan's weekday off is Friday. Pastor Trent's weekday off is Monday.