FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

An Open & Affirming Congregation

Sarah laughing (detail from "Angel Appear to Sarah"), Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, 1726-1728 (Italy)

July 17, 2022
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.

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost:

Pentecost, celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and other followers of Jesus while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Jewish harvest festival of Shavuot. Pentecost Sunday is also called the birthday of the Church, when the apostles went out among the people and began spreading the message of Jesus.

Words in **BOLD** are yours to speak out loud **You are invited to stand

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:
"We always treat guests as angels--just in case."

–Brother Jeremiah

"The peculiar beauty of human excellence just is its vulnerability."

–Martha Nussbaum

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

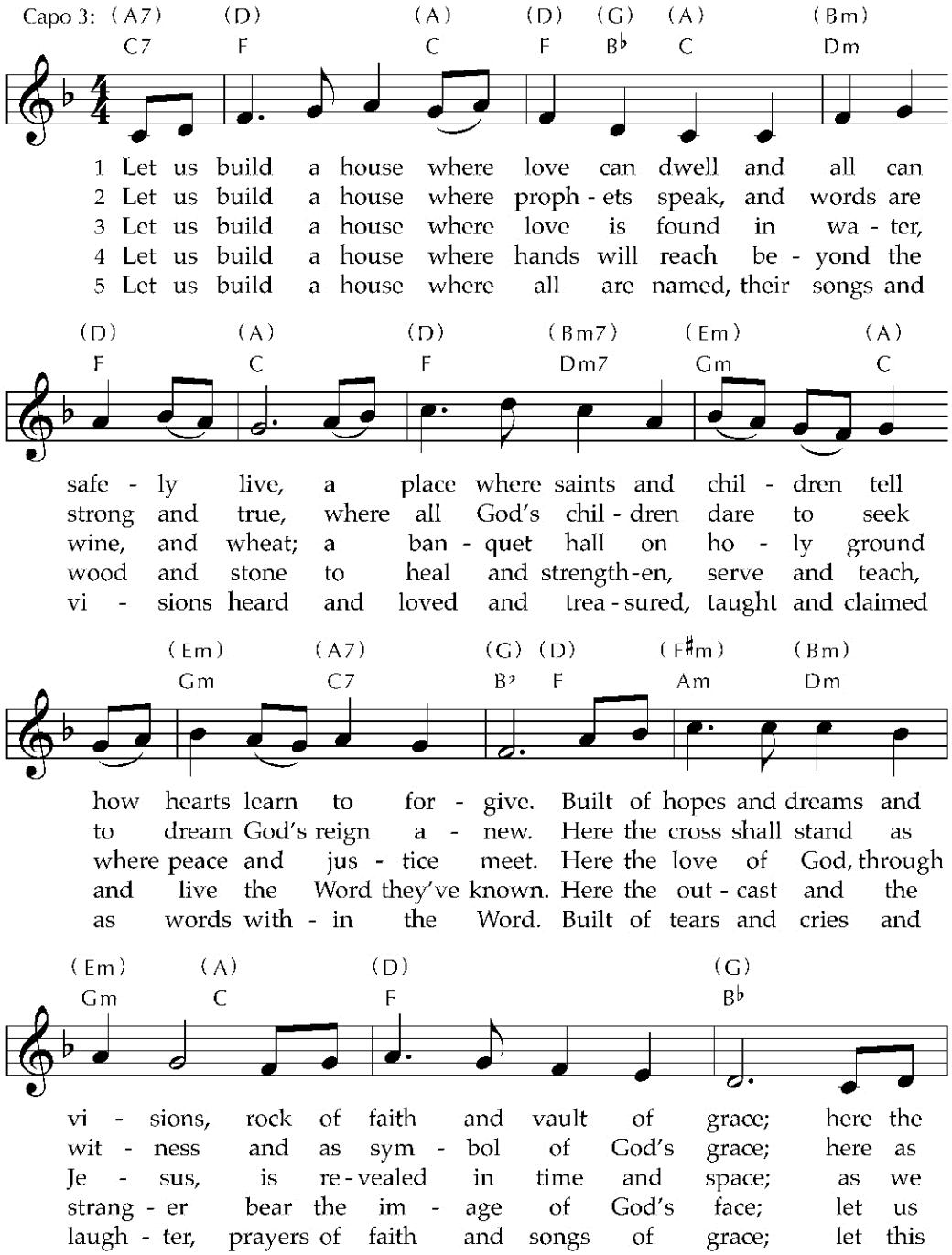
WORDS OF WELCOME Trent Williams

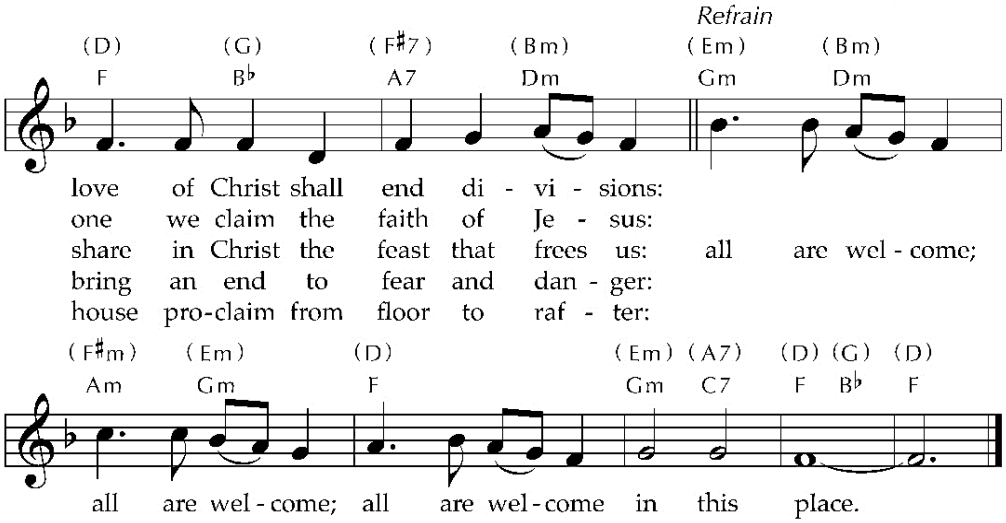
PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

**CALL TO WORSHIP Anne Wehrly

One: Among the poor, among the proud, among the persecuted, among the privileged,
All: Christ is coming to make all things new.
One: In the private house, in the public place, in the wedding feast, in the judgement hall,
All: Christ is coming to make all things new.
One: With a gentle touch, with an angry word, with a clear conscience, with a burning love,
All: Christ is coming to make all things new.
One: That the kingdom might come, that the world might believe, that the powerful might stumble, that the hidden might be seen,
All: Christ is coming to make all things new.
One: Within us, without us, behind us, before us, in this place, in every place, for this time, for all time:
All: Christ is coming to make all things new.

**OPENING HYMN – Glory to God #301: Let Us Build a House (All Are Welcome)





**INVOCATION — Anne Wehrly

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 "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)!

**PASSING OF THE PEACE — Brooke Dooley

EPISTLE READING: Colossians 1:15-28, NRSV — Anne Wehrly

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel. I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am

completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

SPECIAL MUSIC – The King of Love My Shepherd Is – Ancient Irish Melody "Columbia," arranged by Dan Forrest (Tom Vogel, baritone)

The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never; I nothing like if I am His and He is mine forever. Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul He leadeth, and where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.
Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love He sought me, and on His shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing brought me.
The King of love my Shepherd is.
And so through all the length of days Thy goodness faileth never; good Shepherd may I sing Thy praise within Thy house, within Thy house forever.

HEWBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis 18:1-15 NRSV Trent Williams

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

One: The Word of God for the people of God.
All: God is still speaking! Thanks be to God.

THE MESSAGE — Trent Williams

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

FARWELL TESTIMONY — Lauren Vasselli

OFFERTORY INVITATION — Anne Wehrly

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 uplifits,
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION — Dan De Leon

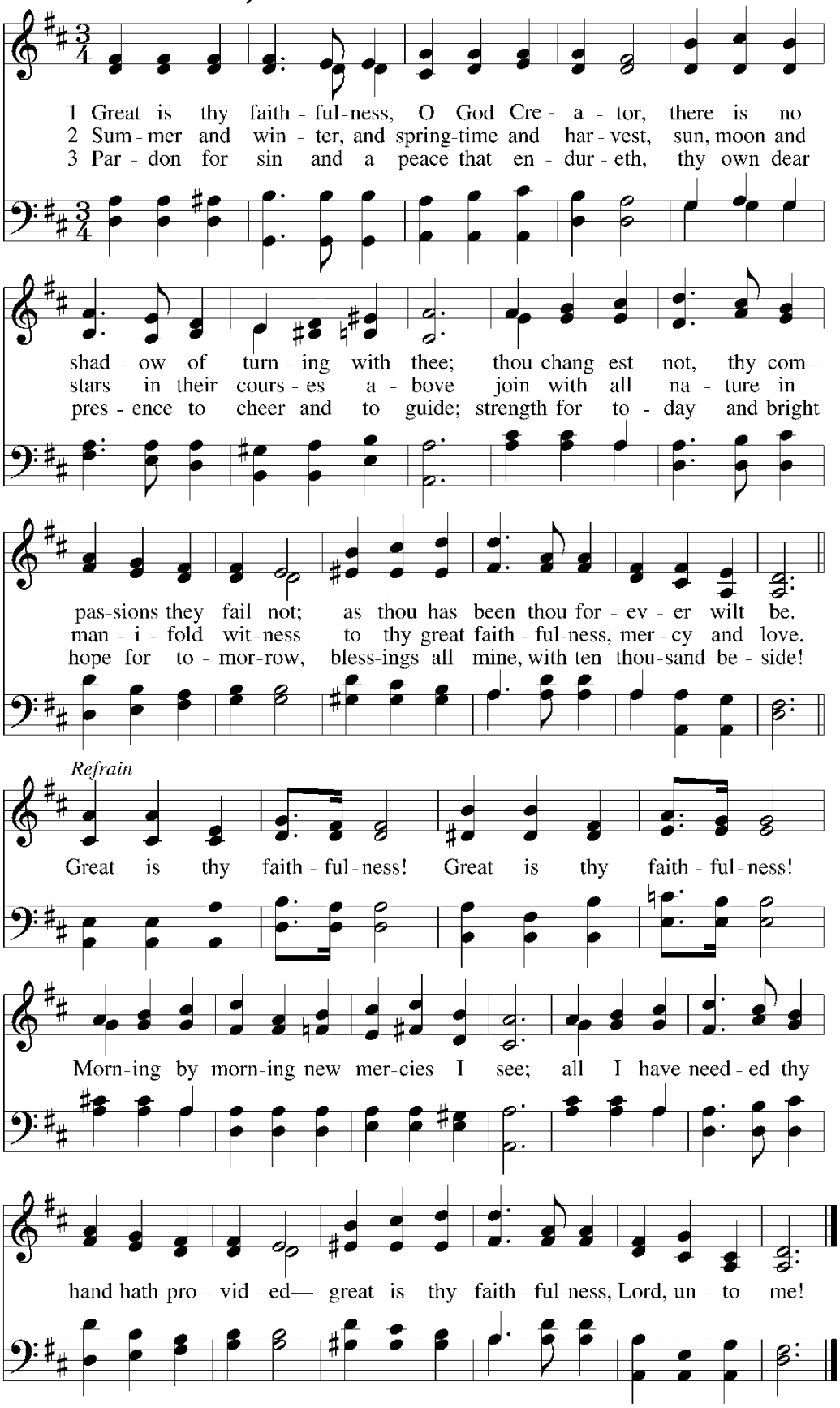
CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION — Dan De Leon & Brooke Dooley

THE LORD'S PRAYER — 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.

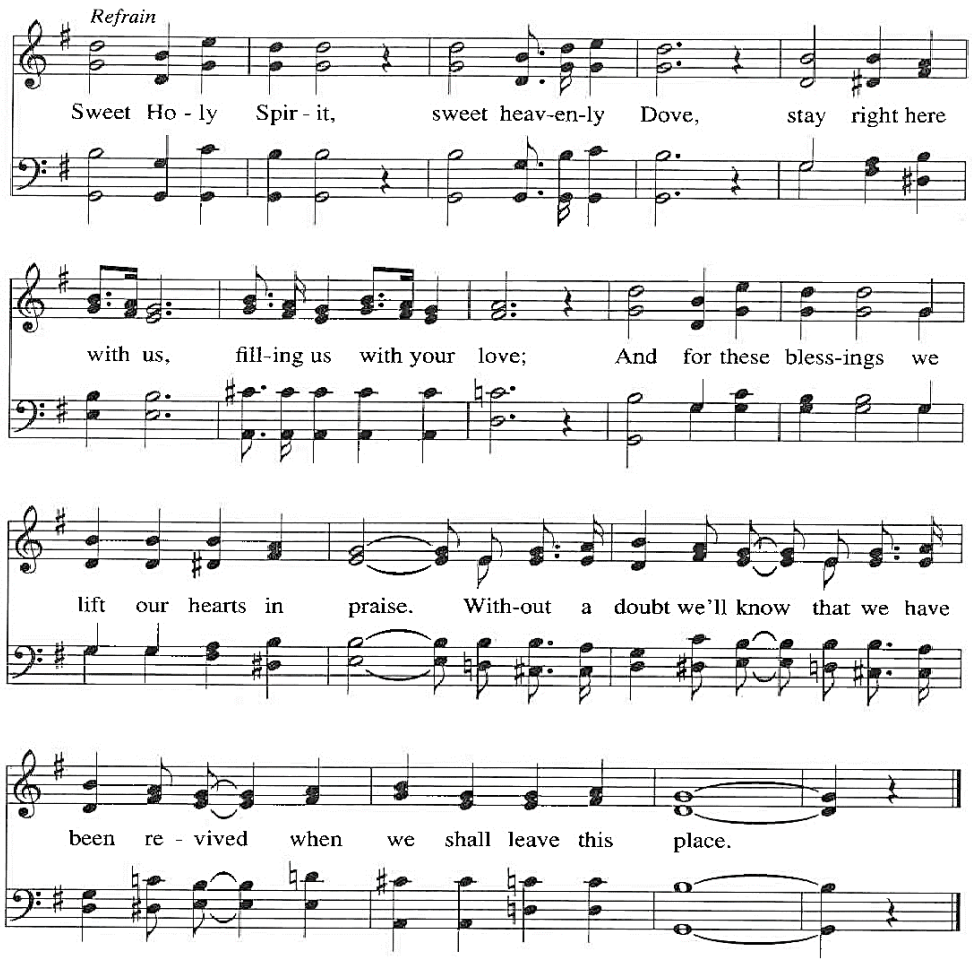
ANNOUNCEMENTS & INVITATION TO JOIN FRIENDS CHURCH — Trent Williams

**CLOSING HYMN: Great Is Thy Faithfulness



**BENEDICTION Trent Williams

**SUNG RESPONSE – NCH 293 – Sweet, Sweet Spirit (Refrain)



POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: *Come My Soul – Franz Joseph Haydn, arranged by Terry Osman*
Offertory: *Prelude – Reinhold Gilére*
Communion: *There is a Balm in Gilead – Traditional Spiritual, arranged by Marilyn Thompson*
Postlude: *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above – Tune from the "Bohemian Brethren's Kirkengesange, arranged by Thomas Chesterton*

Scriptures for July 24th:

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.

WIFI: To access church WiFi, please use this login information,
WiFi – The Promised LAN
Password: stillspeaking

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 three 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. The group is limited to 10-12 people. Attendance at each session is expected, barring an emergency. Group will usually meet in the double classroom at the church.

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.

This group is not appropriate for children and they should not attend. There will be no childcare provided. 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. If uncertain if you would fit, please speak to Maggie Gartner, group leader. New members of the group may join after August 15, 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 maggiegartner68@gmail.com

FRIENDS CHURCH FOOD DISTRIBUTION: It is the 2nd Anniversary of our food distribution this Friday. From June 5th, 2020, in the throes of COVID to now, Friends volunteers have turned up and stood together weekly with Peace Lutheran Church in sharing food with our neighbors. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, join us for an hour or two in the parking lot at Peace Lutheran this Friday (and every Friday) between 2:30 and 6:00 pm to assist in the distribution of food from the Brazos Valley Food Bank. Become part of our very enthusiastic "food team" and make some new friends. Send questions on how to get involved to awehrly@suddenlink.net.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CLASS - Sundays 10am: The Social Justice class currently meets in the music library between the two services. This room is located next to the gender-neutral restroom and the childcare room. We use the UCC Still Speaking Daily Devotional that you can sign up for at *https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/*. It comes to your inbox daily, and each Sunday a volunteer reads one that was meaningful to them that week and this sparks our group discussion. We hope you consider joining us!

PASTOR TRENT'S SUMMER BIBLE STUDY RETURNS: Join us on Wednesdays in July for a summer bible study on "The Life and Letters of Paul." We will be exploring some key events in the life of the Apostle Paul and selections from his epistles. If you've ever wanted to know more about Paul or sometimes struggle with his words, or how they've been used and misused, this study is for you. We will meet on Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm in the double classroom. All are welcome!

SUNFLOWERS NURTURED BY FRIENDS CHURCH CHILDREN IN SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE: The children of Friends Church have been hard at work in the keyhole garden, located behind the church building next to the playground. With the sunflower being the national flower of Ukraine, planting sunflowers has become a way to show support for the Ukrainian people. The sunflower's most important symbolic meaning is for a world of peace. Ukraine was responsible for 46% of the world's sunflower crop until the Russian invasion. So, on April 5, the K-3 Sunday School class planted sunflower seeds as a symbol of unity with Ukrainian children. The children have been watering the garden for the last two months. On June 5, they were greeted by some beautiful sunflower blossoms. Our children invite you to walk around the building to the back to check out their garden. While you're there, offer a prayer for the little ones of Ukraine, and in thanksgiving for our church's children.

MORTGAGE RETIREMENT CAMPAIGN: As announced at our annual congregational meeting on June 26th, we are seeking to retire the remainder of our mortgage debt from the building expansion and renovation in 2013. There's a flyer available in the narthex or at the office side entrance with more information and a pledge form. Help us eliminate this debt and redirect funds to new ministry initiatives; we hope to be able to call a pastor for youth and families in 2023, and renovate our playground. You can give by check (just indicate "mortgage retirement" in the memo line), or online--select "Special Offering" in the drop-down menu, and "Mortgage Retirement Initiative" in the sub-fund menu. Thank you for your generosity!

FRIENDS CHURCH BOOK CLUB: The Linda Coats Book Club meets on the last Thursday of every month. This first year, we will be reading banned books. Our July gathering will be Thursday, July 28, at 6:30 pm. We will read "Dragonwings" by Laurence Yep. The book club will be a hybrid gathering. Look forward to seeing you there!

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*
pastor@friends-ucc.org

The Rev. Trent Williams *he/him/his, Executive Pastor*
pastortrent@friends-ucc.org

Chris Hoffman *he/him/his, Director of Music Ministries*
choir@friends-ucc.org

Brooke Dooley *she/her/they/them, Pastoral Intern*
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