

FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Sunday in Lent
February 18, 2024
9:00am



*An Open & Affirming
Congregation*

PSALM FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 25:1-6, NRSV

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.

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:

“Hope is a song in a weary throat.”

–Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Cathy Hansen

One: Lenten travelers, when you feel the security of God’s love, the affirmation of God’s call, and are covered in God’s grace...

All: God comes near.

One: When you feel deserted and alone, starving and parched for a caring hand or an encouraging word, troubled and uncertain as the ground under you shifts like sand...

All: God comes near.

One: When you feel emboldened to act, inspired to speak, energized to live as bearers of the good news that the Kingdom of God is here...

All: God comes near.

One: In all seasons of our lives, God comes near to us and does not forsake us.

All: **We gather to come near to God whose ever-present love remains near no matter where our journey takes us. Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN #205** Forty Days and Forty Nights

Tune: Heinlein

***INVOCATION**

Cathy Hansen

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Trent Williams

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Trent Williams

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Mary Howell

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.**

EPISTLE READING

1 Peter 3:13-22, NRSV

Trent Williams

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities,

and powers made subject to him.

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

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

THE MESSAGE

Trent Williams

SILENT REFLECTION & MEDITATION

One chime calls us into silence, and two chimes call us out of silence.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LIGHTING OF CANDLES FOR INTERCESSIONS

Trent Williams

INVITATION TO SHARE

Cathy Hansen

OFFERTORY

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

Venmo to 979-307-8860 or @friendsucc

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that love has done;

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Trent Williams

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Trent Williams

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Trent Williams

Heavenly Father, Heavenly Mother, holy and blessed is your true name.

We pray for your reign of peace to come, we pray that your good will be done,

let heaven and earth become one.

Give us this day the bread we need, give it to those who have none.

Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, from each one to each one.

Lead us to holy innocence beyond the evil of our days — come swiftly Mother, Father, come.

For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: forever your name is All in One.

Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN I Love to Tell the Story

Tune: Hankey

1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
 2 I love to tell the sto - ry; 'tis pleas - ant to re - peat
 3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best

of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
 what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
 seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it, like the rest.

I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know 'tis true;
 I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
 And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,

it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else could do.
 the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly Word.
 'twill be the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "I Love to Tell the Story". It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

*BENEDICTION

Trent Williams

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

- Prelude: Forty Days and Forty Nights - Music attributed to Martin Herbst
 Offertory: Cornerstone - Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, Eric Liljero, and Edward Mote; arranged by Phillip Keveren
 Communion: What Wondrous Love - Arranged by Vicki Collinsworth
 Postlude: I Love to Tell the Story - William G. Fischer, arranged by Mary McDonald

Scriptures for Second Sunday in Lent, February 25, 2024: Psalm 22:23-31; Mark 8:31-38

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

INQUIRE + CONNECT CLASS, FEB 18: Are you wanting to learn more about Friends Church? Inquire + Connect is for you! Join us after TODAY'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.

LGBTQ+ CRAFT NIGHT, FEB 18: Pride Community Center, Inc is partnering with Friends 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 TONIGHT 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. <https://bit.ly/Feb2024CraftNight>

“BROKEN”: REAL LIFE AND REAL FAITH, FEB 20, 6:30pm: On Tuesdays during Lent, we will gather in the sanctuary at 6:30pm to watch an episode of the 2017 BBC drama series “Broken” and have conversation about how faith and real life intersect. Even if you can’t make every week, you are welcome to attend, and can view the episodes you might have missed on Amazon Prime or Britbox. Please be advised that the themes can be intense, including suicidal ideation and the intersection of race and police violence. This week we will view episode 2. Contact Pastor Trent if you have any questions.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY WITH WOMEN, FEB 21: Will meet on Wednesday, February 21 at Vino Boheme (206 W 26th St, Bryan).

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.

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: 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), Executive Pastor Trent Williams (pastortrent@friends-ucc.org)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR BROOKE IS AWAY FEBRUARY: Pastor Brooke will be out of the country February 7-29. If you have a pastoral need you can reach out to Pastor Trent or Pastor Dan.

BRAZOS VALLEY AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM ANNUAL APPRECIATION BANQUET, FEB 24: A generous donor has purchased a table in honor of Friends Church at the BVAAM Banquet on Feb 24 from 6-7:30pm. We have ten tickets to give away. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jackie Womack at moderator@friends-ucc.org.

WALL OF GIVING: The youth group will hold a Wall of Giving fundraiser every Sunday in February (before & after both services) in the fellowship area of the sanctuary. The Wall of Giving is a display with 100 envelopes marked with dollar amounts from \$1 to \$100. Those who wish to participate in the fundraiser will select an envelope based on the amount they want to contribute. That amount can be paid either with cash, check or via Venmo (to 979.307.8860 or @friendsucc) with a note that specifies that the money is for the 'Youth Mission Trip.' Inside the envelopes, and in exchange for the contribution, the youth are offering 'I Owe Yous' (Ex. One postcard from the mission trip or one selfie from the mission trip). As always, thank you for your support of our youth group!

REALM UPDATES: We have successfully moved all membership and giving data to our new directory system in Realm. If you haven't yet logged in, just reach out to the church office and we'll send you login information. Next week, an automated email will be going out notifying you about a privacy setting change. This simply means that the church directory is now accessible and viewable by church members and active participants. It is the same setting that was in place with Church Office Online, our previous directory. Your information is secure and accessible only within the Friends Church database behind a login. For more information, see the Realm user guide on the Church Directory page of the church website under the Resources tab or reach out to the church office.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND SHARE

CROCKETT ELEMENTARY BOOK FAIR: Last year our free Book Fair at Crockett Elementary School in Bryan was a great success. Each child received three books to keep. Even the teachers were able to pick two books for themselves. We are doing it again this spring, so it's time to collect books! You can donate books by placing them in the box outside the office, or you can donate gift cards or money, and we will buy books with your donations. If you have questions, please contact Jodie Robinson (jocelinbrune@gmail.com) or Pam Engler (penglertx@gmail.com). Thank you!

VOLUNTEER VOICES NEEDED FOR FRIENDS CHURCH PODCAST: Our new weekly podcast, featuring the messages from Sunday worship services, is introduced by Friends Church members giving a brief testimony of what Friends Church means to them. To volunteer to introduce an episode, contact A/V Tech Jeremy Dudo at av@friends-ucc.org.

Be a Greeter and Communion Steward: To help in the 9am and 11am services, please contact Worship Committee Chair Ryan Womack: 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 year, including the June Mission Trip. Contact Pastor Brooke at pastor-brooke@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: Do you enjoy having coffee/hot beverages available at Sunday morning services? Signup via sheet on counter in kitchen, or Sign-up Genius (link provided in Friday church email) or by contacting Fellowship@ friends-ucc.org. Training available by request.

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

LINDA COATS BOOK CLUB, 2/29: JOIN US on February 29, as we discuss the book What Makes You Come Alive - A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman by Lerita Coleman Brown. We meet at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. All are welcome. For questions or more information, contact the Spiritual Life Committee.

FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS, 3/1: 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.

Friends Church Staff

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