



Friends Church
An Open & Affirming Congregation



Solar Eclipse from Mount Santa Lucia
Carleton E. Watkins (1889)

December 03, 2023
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: Jodie Robinson & Jarrett Baker-Wilkinson
Communion Stewards: Mary Johnson & Holly Scott
Greeters: Doris Machinski & Lanette and Rick Schulte

Next Sunday, December 10th:
Lay Leaders: David Manuel & Kathy Miller
Greeters: Maura Ives & Martha Newsome

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: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, CEB

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always for you, because of God's grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus. That is, you were made rich through him in everything: in all your communication and every kind of knowledge, in the same way that the testimony about Christ was confirmed with you. The result is that you aren't missing any spiritual gift while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also confirm your testimony about Christ until the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and you were called by him to partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Brooke Dooley

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jarrett Baker-Wilkinson

*HYMN FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE - LIGHT ONE CANDLE

With purpose (♩ = 88)

1 Light one can - dle for hope,
 2 Light one can - dle for peace,
 3 Light one can - dle for joy,
 4 Light one can - dle for love,

hope that the whole world needs.
 peace that the whole world needs.
 joy that the whole world needs.
 love that the whole world needs.

Light one can - dle for hope,
 Light one can - dle for peace,
 Light one can - dle for joy,
 Light one can - dle for love,

hope that the Sav - ior will bring;
 peace that the Sav - ior will bring;
 joy that the Sav - ior will bring;
 love that the Sav - ior will bring;

hope that the Sav - ior will bring.
 peace that the Sav - ior will bring.
 joy that the Sav - ior will bring.
 love that the Sav - ior will bring.

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*INVOCATION

Jarrett Baker-Wilkinson

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Tami Dudo

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 #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 (oh let it shine)!**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

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

***HYMN OF RESPONSE #107** - Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 64:1-9, NRSV

Jarrett Baker-Wilkinson

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

CHORAL ANTHEM: O Come, Emmanuel - Elaine Hagenberg
(Andrew Nguyen, violoncello)

O come!

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Come, O come...

O come thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine Advent here, and drive away
the shades of night, and pierce the clouds, and bring us light!

Rejoice! Rejoice Emmanuel, shall come to Thee, O Israel.

O come...

O come, Desire of nations, bind all people in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and
quarrels cease, and fill the world with Heaven's peace.

O rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to Thee, O Israel.

O come...

“But in those days, after that suffering,

the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

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 SHARE**

Jarrett Baker-Wilkinson

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

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

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)

For the wondrous ways this offering will breathe hope into our community, and for the ways it will help us live out God's mission, we dedicate these gifts. Let this offering strengthen our call to carry out God's justice, mercy, and love. Amen.

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 our 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

Dan De Leon, Brooke Dooley

*CLOSING HYMN #113 Little Bethlehem of Judah

Tune: Westridge

*BENEDICTION

Dan De Leon

Go, all ye faith - ful! All who know the Sav - ior.
[Go all ye faith - ful! Take the joy* of Christ - mas.]

Car - ry the mes - sage far be - yond these walls.

Hold forth the Christ - light. Con - quer ev - ry dark - ness.

Go forth, O church of Je - sus! Pro - claim the One who frees us!

Speak peace! Reach out in mer - cy, in kind - ness and love.

* For Christmas text, substitute "I bring you the joy of Christmas."

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel - 15th Century French Melody, adapted by Thomas Helmore
Offertory: Once in Royal David's City - Henry J. Gauntlett, arranged by Rodney Abriol
Communion: Wachet Auf, Ruft Uns Die Stimme - Johann Sebastian Bach
Postlude: For Unto Us a Child Is Born (Inspired by Handel's Messiah) - George Frideric Handel, arranged by Faye López

Scripture for Second Sunday in Advent, December 10, 2023: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

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

FAIR TRADE CRAFT SALE- Dec. 3: Get a jump on your Christmas shopping today. 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 before or after church on Dec. 3rd. In the event of inclement weather, the sale will move inside the church.

PARENTS OF TEENS AND TWEENS (POTTS): POTTS will meet TONIGHT in the sanctuary 5:30-7:00 p.m. for a relaxed time of fellowship with games and snacks while the Youth Group meets down the hall. Please bring your own beverage and a favorite game(s) and snack to share. Feel free to bring younger siblings with games they will enjoy.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ANNOUNCED - Dec 3. Sunday, December 3rd after the 11:00 service, join us for a congregational meeting to discuss important issues about church finances. This informational meeting will not require any voting.

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

THEOLOGY ON TAP & BRYAN CHRISTMAS PARADE: Theology on Tap on Dec. 7 at Kinder-Hill Brew Lab, 800 S. Bryan, meets at 5:30pm. We're gathering a half-hour earlier than usual so that all who wish to attend the Lighted Holiday Parade in downtown Bryan, which starts at 7pm that evening, can make it there in time for the festivities. Contact info@friends-ucc.org for more information. Cheers, and amen!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT DRESS REHEARSAL: Dress rehearsal for Christmas Pageant on Dec. 9. All youth and any child with a speaking part should show up at 10:30 am. All children with non-speaking parts should show up at 11:30 am. A hotdog lunch will be provided at 12:30 pm.

MORNING MEDITATIONS FOR ADVENT BEGIN- Dec. 5: 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. 5, 12, & 19, we gather for a brief introduction, followed by silent meditation, and follow-up conversation as time permits. 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET FOR ADVENT NOW AVAILABLE: Advent begins Sunday, December 3. Copies of the UCC's Daily Devotionals booklet for Advent, GLOW are available for pickup in the narthex; one per household, please. The electronic version (pdf) may be purchased individually at thepilgrimpress.com.

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.

9AM SERVICES ON BREAK FOR 2 SUNDAYS: The 9am worship service will not be offered on Sundays, December 24 and 31. Join us for the 11am service on those Sundays, and for the Handbell Choir Concert and Christmas Eve Service on Christmas Eve night. The 9am services resume on January 7, 2024.

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!

FRIENDS CHURCH ANGEL TREE: Thank you! All children and youth have been sponsored. You can review your sponsored child and instructions for delivering presents by following the link on the 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. Contact awehrly@suddenlink.net with questions.

SHARE YOUR TIME AND TALENTS: There are plenty of opportunities for you to share your time and talents both here at the church and in the community.

Greeters and Communion Stewards Needed: If you can help with a 9am Sunday service or two, 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 remaining Youth Group events for the fall, including lessons, and a Christmas party. 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: Volunteer once or multiple times to prepare the coffee for the 9am or the 11am service. Contact 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

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS WITH WOMEN: Will gather on December 13 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at Papa Perez in Downtown Bryan. This month we'll be doing an optional White Elephant Gift Exchange. If you would like to participate, the spending limit is \$20. All are welcome.

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