

FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Friendsgiving
November 19, 2023
5:30pm



*An Open & Affirming
Congregation*

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Dan De Leon

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Henry Ballweg

One: When the Lord changed our circumstances for the better,
it was like we had been dreaming.

**All: Our mouths were suddenly filled with laughter;
our tongues were filled with joyful shouts.**

One: It was even said, at that time, among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them!”

**All: Yes, the Lord has done great things for us,
and we are overjoyed.**

One: Lord, change our circumstances for the better,
like dry streams in the desert waste!

Let those who plant with tears reap the harvest with joyful shouts.

**All: Let those who go out, crying and carrying their seed,
come home with joyful shouts, carrying bales of grain!**

***OPENING SONG** No. 425, For the Fruit of All Creation

**For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For God's gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
Future needs in earth's safe-keeping, thanks be to God.**

**In the just reward of labor, God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done.
In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.**

**For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
Most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.**

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Dan De Leon

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Deuteronomy 8:7-18, NRSV

Sean Dudo

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper.

You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to

yourself, “My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.” But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

SPECIAL MUSIC Now Thank We All Our God - arranged by Richard Walters

Chris Hoffman, tenor

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:25-33 (The Message)

Oliver Beer

“If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don’t fuss about what’s on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

“Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

“If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think he’ll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God’s giving. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

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

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

SHARING OUR THANKSGIVINGS

Brooke Dooley

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

**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.**

BENEDICTION AND BLESSING OF THE MEAL

Ludi Manthei

The love offering for tonight's Thanksgiving feast benefits the Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network, "promoting the human dignity and wellbeing of all immigrants in our community."