



# Friends Church

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*



*Parable of the Talents*  
Annette Gandy Fortt (1987)

November 19, 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: Dinah Anderson & Holly Scott  
Communion Steward: Kathy Yeager & Mo Bertrand  
Greeters: Eli Vasquez & Martha Newsome

Next Sunday, Nov. 26:  
Lay Leaders: Tami Dudo & Katy Stewart  
Greeters: Kathy Yeager & 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](mailto: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.

## *Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost*

Pentecost, celebrated 50 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.

### **QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:**

“We are all so connected, it’s like our lifelines are braided. Never underestimate the value of your existence. Your existence is a gift to this world in ways that won’t always be obvious to you, especially when you’re in pain. But our impact is rarely obvious to us. We save each other’s lives every single day.”

Andrea Gibson

### **CHIMING OF THE TRINITY**

### **WORDS OF WELCOME**

Dan De Leon

### **PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES**

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Holly Scott

One: The time for harvest is close at hand. What have you done with the gifts God has given you?

**All: We have brought our gifts to the house of the Lord.**

One: Praise God for the gifts and for opportunities for service that they represent.

**All: We praise God for all the ways in which our lives have been blessed.**

One: Generous God, accept our gifts and our lives this day.

**All: Loving God, accept our praise and gratitude. Amen.**

### **\*OPENING HYMN #448 Take My Life, God, Let It Be**

Tune: Vienna

### **\*INVOCATION**

Holly Scott

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Dan De Leon

*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)!**

## INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Dan De Leon

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Dan De Leon

**Almighty Creator,**

**We confess that we have not lived into your first instruction for us,  
to care for the earth as you have cared for us.**

**We have failed to live into our created intention,  
to be stewards of all our glorious creation.**

**As we gather in this season of thanksgiving, we confess our sins.**

**We have turned to the ways of the world,**

**to worldly measures of success through wealth,**

**possessions, and notoriety, instead of living as you first desired:**

**to care for the earth and its bounty so there will be an abundance for all.**

**Forgive us of our sins. Call us into accountability of our own use of resources.**

**Hold us to your intention for us, to care for this earth as a precious gift from you,  
in whom we give our thanks. Amen.**

## SILENT PRAYER AND MEDITATION

## ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Dan De Leon

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Dan De Leon

**One: The peace of Christ be with you all.**

**Many: And also with you!**

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

**CHORAL ANTHEM:** O Lux Beatissima - Howard Helvey

O Light most blessed, fill the inmost heart of all thy faithful. Without your grace, there is nothing in us, nothing that is not harmful.

"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave;

you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

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

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

## **THE MESSAGE**

Brooke Dooley

## **MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

## **INVITATION TO SHARE**

Holly Scott

## **OFFERTORY**

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at [bit.ly/givetofriendsucc](https://bit.ly/givetofriendsucc)  
Venmo to 979-307-8860 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 uplifts,  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

## **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Dan De Leon

God whose giving knows no ending, we offer up the treasure that you have entrusted to us. We offer up the skills and time that you have graciously given to us; we offer up ourselves in service and praise. Receive these gifts by your grace. Multiply and use them through the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish Christ's work of love in the world. Amen.

## **CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Dan De Leon

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Dan De Leon

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 #564** We Are Not Our Own

Tune: Yarnton

**\*BENEDICTION**

Brooke Dooley

## **POSTLUDE**

Hymns reprinted with permission — One License #A-730489, CCLI #20046014  
Instrumental Music:

Prelude: The Solid Rock - arranged by Robert W. Thygerson  
Offertory: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come - arranged by Joshua Evanovich  
Communion: Give Thanks/Now Thank We All Our God - arranged by Joel Raney  
Postlude: For the Fruit of All Creation - Welsh Melody, arranged by Jane Holstein

Scripture for Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, November 26, 2023: Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

## 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](mailto:office@friends-ucc.org).

## EVENTS THIS WEEK

**TODAY!! FRIENDSGIVING 2023:** Our Annual Friendsgiving Dinner will be held today, Sunday, November 19, in the church sanctuary beginning with worship at 5:30 p.m. This year’s dinner is a potluck, and plenty of folks have signed up to bring turkey, ham, and all the sides and desserts. All are welcome.

**FRIENDS CHURCH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT SURVEY DUE NOV 22:** Please let us know we can count on your child/youth for the Friends Church Christmas Pageant by completing this survey, by November 22nd, using the link: <https://tinyurl.com/2023PageantParts> or see the Pageant article in TW@F.

**TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE VIGIL Nov. 22:** Pride Community Center invites all to remember the lives of those lost to anti-transgender violence and hate from this past year. The Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil will be held on November 20th, 2023 at Sue Haswell park, pavilion A at 6pm. Name readers and other volunteers are welcome. Sign up at <https://www.volunteersignup.org/KAJXL>



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PASTORS AWAY FOR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS:** Pastor Dan and Pastor Brooke will be away from the church office Nov. 22-24. Should you have a pastoral emergency during that time, contact Pastor Dan: [pastor@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@friends-ucc.org).

**CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING:** The church office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday Nov. 23 & 24.

**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.

**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](http://thepilgrimpress.com).

**FRIENDS CHURCH PODCAST:** "Friends Congregational Church Sermons" has launched! Our 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](mailto:av@friends-ucc.org). Look for it on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music/Audible, iHeartRadio, PlayerFM, Listen Notes, Samsung, Podchaser, or Boomplay; and spread the word!

## 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!

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION AT PEACE LUTHERAN:** No volunteers are needed this Friday (Nov 24th). Please join us again on Dec. 1st. Contact Anne Wehrly with questions at awehrly@suddenlink.net.

**FRIENDS CHURCH ANGEL TREE:** The Friends Church Angel Tree is back this year! This is a way that Friends can bring joy to children from around Brazos County. The Justice and Mission committee has been in touch with the Brazos County Child Welfare Board to find 64 children for Friends folk to sponsor. These are all children and youth who are in foster care or receiving other support services. You may choose your sponsored child in person TODAY after worship, at Friendsgiving this evening, or sign up virtually on the Friends website beginning Monday. 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.

**Recruiting Fellowship Committee members:** The Fellowship Committee at Friends is reforming and needs members. Two ways to participate: help plan church fellowship events or volunteer for individual events. Contact Jan Paterson at Fellowship@Friends-UCC.org with questions or to sign up.

**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

**FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS - DEC. 1:** Jon Taute will be at Blackwater Draw, 701 N Main St, Bryan beginning at 5:30 pm to grab some tables and greet Friends folks. Good fellowship, good beer and of course non-alcoholic options available. There will be a food truck starting around 6pm as well.

**HELP PREP THE CHURCH FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS-DEC. 2:** It's almost time to hang the greens, put up the purple, and deck the halls! On Saturday December 2nd, at 10am, the Worship Committee invites you to help set up and decorate the sanctuary and narthex for Advent and Christmas. We are changing the banners, hanging wreaths, setting up the angel trees, and putting out the Advent candles. Chris Hoffman will crank out carols on the piano to put us in the spirit as we work and enjoy hot cocoa, cider, and holiday treats. RSVP to help by emailing [worship@friends-ucc.org](mailto:worship@friends-ucc.org).

**FAIR TRADE CRAFT SALE- Dec. 2 & 3:** Get a jump on your Christmas shopping Saturday and Sunday (Dec. 2 & 3). 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 10-2 or before or after church on Dec. 3rd. In the event of inclement weather, the sale will move inside the church.

**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.

**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.

# Friends Congregational Church United Church of Christ

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## 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