



# Friends Church

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*



*Berakah*

Hannah Garrity, inspired by Luke 1:57-80

December 8, 2024

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 & Kathy Miller  
Greeters: Carolyn Young & Alex Cannon

Next Sunday, Dec 15:  
Lay Leaders: Becky Burks & Holly Scott  
Communion Steward: Kathy Yeager  
Greeters: Kathy Yeager, Doris Machinski, & Stacy De Leon

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.

## *Second 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:** Malachi 3:1-4, CEB

Look, I am sending my messenger who will clear the path before me; suddenly the Lord whom you are seeking will come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you take delight is coming, says the Lord of heavenly forces. Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can withstand his appearance? He is like the refiner's fire or the cleaner's soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. They will belong to the Lord, presenting a righteous offering. The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in ancient days and in former years.

### **CHIMING OF THE TRINITY**

### **WORDS OF WELCOME**

Trent Williams

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

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)**

Kathy Miller

One: If life was a home, then we would pray—

All: **may love be the foundation.**

**May God be the cornerstone.**

**May the Spirit be the windows—ushering light in.**

**And may hope be the walls—holding us together.**

One: In this hour of worship, let us work toward building that home together.

All: **We may not know the path ahead, but God is here, even now.**

One: Let us give thanks for a foundation of love.

All: **Let us worship Holy God.**

# \*OPENING HYMN FOR LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES -

While We Are Waiting, Come

Waiting (verse 1 & 2 only)

1 While we are wait - ing, come;  
2 With power and glo - ry, come;  
3 Come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come;

while we are wait - ing, come.  
with power and glo - ry, come.  
come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come.

Je - sus, our Lord, Em - man - u - el,

while we are wait - ing, come.

## \*INVOCATION

Kathy Miller

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Lanette Schulte

*Children in the sanctuary are invited to come to the front. 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.**

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Trent Williams

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Trent Williams

Holy God, when John was Born, Zechariah leaned down  
and whispered words of love into his ear.

We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out, yet we fail to hear it.

We forget that in the beginning we were made good.

We doubt that we could possibly be enough.

We hustle for our self-worth and wear ourselves out aiming for perfection.

We deflect words of praise.

We hide behind shiny first impressions.

Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job.

Open our ears as you open our hearts, so that we might rest on the foundation  
of goodness you have laid for us.

Gratefully we pray, amen.

## WORDS OF FORGIVENESS (RESPONSIVE)

Trent Williams

One: Family of faith, no matter how old we get, God continues to say to us:

“You are loved; you are forgiven.” That is the foundation of our lives.

That is the truth upon which we build our home.

So breathe deeply. There is grace and peace here.

Join me in proclaiming this good news:

All: **We are loved. We are forgiven. We are claimed.**

**This is our foundation. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Trent Williams

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: **And also with you!**

\***HYMN OF RESPONSE:** No. 107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn *Rejoice, Rejoice*

## EPISTLE READING

Philippians 1:3-11, NRSV

Kathy Miller

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of  
my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until  
now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it  
to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart,  
for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense  
and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the  
compassion of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and

full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**CHORAL ANTHEM** - Prepare! (from Canticle of Joy) - Joseph M. Martin

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, prepare ye the way Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our King. Come greet the Messiah. Lift your voice and sing!

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, prepare ye the way Lord. Let every hosanna be lifted to the sky. Sing alleluia, redemption draweth nigh.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, prepare ye the way Lord. Ye sleepers awake, for this is the day. Prepare ye the way, prepare ye the way, prepare ye the way of the Lord. Prepare!

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, prepare ye the way Lord. Ye sleepers awake, for this is the day, the glorious day of the Lord. Prepare ye the way, prepare ye the way. Prepare!

**GOSPEL READING**

Luke 1:57-80, NRSV

Dan De Leon

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

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

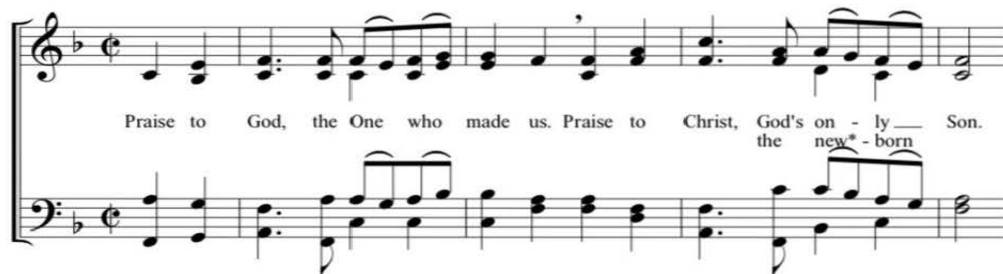
## INVITATION TO SHARE

Kathy Miller

## OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at [bit.ly/givetofriendsucc](http://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 & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Trent Williams

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

Trent Williams

\*CLOSING HYMN - No. 110 Now Bless the God of Israel

*Forest Green*

## \*BENEDICTION

Dan De Leon

## POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus - Rowland H. Prichard, arranged by Victor Labenske  
Offertory: The Snow Lay on the Ground (Venite Adoremus), Inspired by Vivaldi's *Lute Concerto in D Major* - Traditional English Carol, arranged by Faye López  
Postlude: O Little Town of Bethlehem (Forest Green) - Traditional English melody, arranged by Dan Forrest Jr.

Third Sunday of Advent, December 15, 2024: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 3:1-18; Philippians 4:4-7

## 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

**FRIENDS ANGEL TREE DEADLINE, DEC 9:** Please drop off your gifts for the Angel Tree by Monday, Dec 9 by 7:00pm. We will continue to collect gift cards and you can leave them in the gift card box under the tree or with Michael in the church office. Contact [awehrly@suddenlink.net](mailto:awehrly@suddenlink.net) with questions.



**ADVENT MEDITATION, DEC 10:** 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. 10 & 17, we gather for a brief introduction, followed by silent meditation, and follow-up conversation as time permits. Start to finish, this lasts between 35 and 45 minutes, hopefully allowing for those of us with work, school, and other obligations to get where we need to be on time. 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.

**MIDWEEK ADVENT RECITALS, DEC 11:** Needing time to pause and surround yourself by the sounds of the season? If so, join us each Wednesday in December (11th and 18th) for a brown-bag lunch followed by a short musical program. Gather for food and fellowship at 11:30, and then stay for a 30-minute Recital of holiday music at noon, featuring the musical talents of our Friends Church musicians. We hope you can join us!

**FAIR TRADE CRAFT SALE, DEC 8:** Get a jump on your Christmas shopping Saturday and Sunday (Dec. 8). 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 today before or after church on Sunday Dec. 8th. In the event of inclement weather, the craft sale will move inside the church building.

**FRIENDS CHURCH'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CANTATA, DEC 12:** The highly anticipated Friends Church Choir's Christmas Cantata will take place on Thursday, December 12, at 7:30 pm. This year, the Chancel Choir and Chamber Orchestra will collaborate to perform Elaine Hagenberg's moving Masterwork "Illuminare." As always, a wonderful reception will follow this magnificent service of worship through music. All are welcome. We look forward to celebrating the season with you!

**WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY WITH WOMEN, DEC 11:** Wonderful Wednesdays with Women will be held at Mr. G's Pizza at 201 W. 26th Street in Downtown Bryan on December 11th from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. And back by popular demand, we will be doing an optional White Elephant Gift Ex-change (maximum spending limit is \$20). If you choose to participate in the gift exchange, please bring your gift wrapped or in a gift bag. Contact Stacy De Leon at stacybdeleon@gmail.com if you have questions.

**GUYZ BREAKFAST, DEC 14:** Guyz Breakfast brings together fellowship, fun and great food. Join us at the church on the second Saturday of the month 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. Bring your favorite breakfast food or drink to share. Pancakes and coffee are provided.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR YOUTH GROUP'S 2025 MISSION TRIP PLANNING TEAM:** Do you love hearing from the Friends Youth Group each year about the great work they do on their Mission Trip? How'd you like to be part of the team that ensures our Youth have the best experience possible? We are currently in need of volunteers to serve on the Planning Team for the Youth Group's 2025 Mission Trip to Denver. This includes planning fundraisers, travel, and fun activities while in Colorado. Reach out to Pastor Brooke at [pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org) to be part of this important ministry.

**HELP NEEDED AND APPRECIATED: SIGN CHANGER TEAM FOR DECEMBER AND NEW YEAR:** Ever had a passion or interest in changing (and even suggest messages for) the church sign? Signer changers appreciated all year round, especially this month, with the end of year holiday season. This is your SIGN to learn more by connecting with Megan Alvear at [evangelism@friends-ucc.org](mailto:evangelism@friends-ucc.org). Thank you for your consideration!

**FRIENDS GREETERS NEEDED:** Join our Friends Church greeter team! We are in need of additional folks to help welcome people on Sunday mornings and make our worship services flow smoothly. If you are interested in learning more, reach out to Worship Committee chair Charity Stokes at [worship@friends-ucc.org](mailto:worship@friends-ucc.org). You can also sign up online here: [bit.ly/FriendsGreeter](https://bit.ly/FriendsGreeter).

**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED:** We have all the Sunday school classes covered but are still looking for volunteers who could be called when teachers are out of town to be substitutes. Please let Pastor Dan or Abby Burley, [Christian\\_ed@friends-ucc.org](mailto:Christian_ed@friends-ucc.org), know if we can add you to our list.

**ADVENT DEVOTIONALS ARE HERE:** Advent begins Sunday 12/3! Copies of the UCC's Daily Devotionals booklet for Advent, *THE MESS IN THE MESSIAH*, 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).

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND SHARE

**SUPPORT OUR PODCAST:** Help us spread the good word! Share this week's sermon with those you love with our "Friends Congregational Church Sermons" podcast, available wherever you can find podcasts! Easily access and publicize our mission to follow the model of Jesus: to live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly. With over 100 episodes published (since Advent of last year) we've expanded (since Eastertide this year) our efforts to include the wider library of sermons offered before this podcast kicked off. We would love to have your support by either showing this podcast to friends and loved ones, and/or contributing your voice to introduce an episode. Volunteers can reach out to [av@friends-ucc.org](mailto:av@friends-ucc.org) (Jeremy) if interested, or you might get approached after service. Recording takes less than 10 minutes and is almost entirely scripted.

**Be a Greeter and Communion Steward:** To help in the 9am and 11am services, please contact Worship Committee Chair Charity Stokes: [worship@friends-ucc.org](mailto: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 school year. Contact Pastor Brooke at [pastorbrooke@friend-ucc.org](mailto: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](mailto:pastor@friends-ucc.org).

**Coffee Crew/Kitchen Angel:** "All I need is coffee; all we need are volunteers to make it!"

Sign up via sheet on kitchen counter, at [bit.ly/friendschurchcoffee](http://bit.ly/friendschurchcoffee) or email Jan at [Fellowship@friends-ucc.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://Friends-ucc.org)) ▶ Get **Involved** ▶ **Volunteer** or email [office@friends-ucc.org](mailto:office@friends-ucc.org) for more information or to volunteer.

## SAVE THE DATE

**LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE, DEC 18:** The Longest Night service will be held on Dec 18 at 6:30pm. All are welcome.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, DEC 24:** The Christmas Eve service will be held on Dec 24 at 6:30pm. All are welcome.

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED & UPDATES, DEC 25-27:** The church office will be closed on Wednesday, Dec 25 for Christmas Day. Michael will also be on vacation from Thursday (Dec 26) and Friday (Dec 27). Please send him any updates for worship and marketing before the holiday.

# 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

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2200 Southwood Drive College Station, Texas 77845  
979-693-7021 • office@friends-ucc.org  
www.friends-ucc.org • Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00–3:00  
Pastor Dan's weekday off is Friday. Pastor Trent's weekday off is Monday.