

FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Sunday of Advent
December 03, 2023
9:00am



*An Open & Affirming
Congregation*

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION: Isaiah 64:1-9, NRSV

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.

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Brooke Dooley

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jodie Robinson

*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

Jodie Robinson

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: And also with you.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Brooke Dooley

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.

GOSPEL READING

Mark 13:24-37, NRSV

Dan De Leon

“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

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

Brooke Dooley

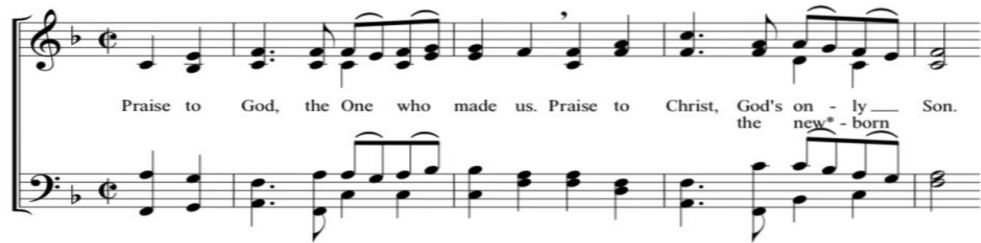
INVITATION TO SHARE

Jodie Robinson

OFFERTORY

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

*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.

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; 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.

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!

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.

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 Church Staff

Senior Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon (*he, him*)
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Director of Music Ministries

Chris Hoffman (*he, him*)
choir@friends-ucc.org

Executive Pastor

The Rev. Trent Williams (*he, him*)
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Associate Pastor to Youth & Young Adults

The Rev. Brooke Dooley (*she, her, they, them*)
pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org

Administrative Assistant

Michael Rangel (*he, him*)
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