

**SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASSES at 9:15am – All are welcome!**  
**MORNING MANNA:** The class is studying the Gospel of Mark, using selections from Ched Myers' book "Say to this Mountain: Mark's Story of Discipleship." Feel free to come as you are or email Pastor Trent for weekly readings: [pastortrent@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastortrent@friends-ucc.org). **SOCIAL JUSTICE:** The class aims to explore how our spiritual beliefs inform our daily life and our interactions with the world. Meeting location is in the church office. Contact: Pam Engler: [penglertx@gmail.com](mailto:penglertx@gmail.com).

### **INVITING THE COMMUNITY INTO CONVERSATION – FAITH IN ACTION:**

You have been asked to think prayerfully about answers to these questions: How do people in the community see us and how do we want to be seen? How does Friends Church become and remain a beacon of hope, an incubator of dialogue and activism based on our faith, and innovators who desire to "change the societal landscape"? On Sunday, January 21, during the Announcements in the worship service, you have a chance to put those answers into action and to help select the two topics for our 2018 Community Conversation series. We will be using our phones to vote, but paper ballots will also be available. Consider these four options: *"I Am Not Your Negro": Confronting Race* – A round table discussion inspired by the James Baldwin documentary including an emphasis on desegregating Sunday; *Housing Justice in Bryan/College Station: Affordable, Integrated and Inclusive* – A discussion of issues related to lack of affordable housing, unregulated development and socio-economic segregation, as well as abuses of tenants by mobile home park owners; *Faith and Gender Spectrum* – A conversation about "how faith communities can work to become more intentionally inclusive and supportive of gender diversity within their congregations and the community."; *Mental Health Awareness: Recognizing and Responding to Invisible Disabilities*. An event to explore ways faith communities can become more welcoming and supportive to those with mental health issues. Think about how you might prioritize these topics – which ones might be most timely or urgent or compelling and might help us talk with our neighbors about how to put our faith into action. Prepare to vote! Bring your phones!

**BUDGETARY PROCESS FOR 2018:** The budgetary revision process for 2018 is proceeding. The Stewardship Campaign resulted in the largest amount of money pledged towards the Operating Budget in the life of our Congregation, and we're estimating a total of \$289,310 of contributions for 2018. However, our proposed budget for 2018 was \$394,265 thus leaving a shortfall of \$104,955 which Council is now trying to address. We realize that trying to pay for the building repairs due to Hurricane Harvey within the Operating Budget is impossible, even if we choose to undertake only cosmetic repairs. Therefore Council is formulating plans to address the building repairs separate from the Operating Budget. A tentative revised budget that reduces overall expenses to match the estimated \$289,310 income is now circulating among the Congregation's leadership team to solicit feedback, as well as ideas for optimizing our activities for 2018 as efficiently as possible. In mid-January expect to see a draft proposed budget for consideration by the Congregation. We will be having a **Congregational Meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup>** after worship for presentation of the final budget and adoption. If you have questions or concerns about the budgetary process, feel welcome to contact the Moderator, Dwight Baker [[dwight.d.baker@gmail.com](mailto:dwight.d.baker@gmail.com)] or Associate Moderator, Kelly Wellman [[kellywellman@yahoo.com](mailto:kellywellman@yahoo.com)].

**THANKS FROM THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE:** Thanks to the group that turned out last week to work on the playground clean up and the drainage project. We had such a great turnout that we were also able to get several other outside projects done. Be sure you take a look at the playground and the picnic area to see the results of a lot of hard work done by many! We will have our next work day on Aggie Big Event Day (March 24th) so please put that on your calendar.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHTS WITH THE UCC'S STATEMENT OF FAITH:** On Wednesday of Christ Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, we spoke the United Church of Christ's Statement of Faith in unison as a "Renewal of Baptism." On Wednesday nights, January 10 – February 7, Midweek Spiritual Development offers a series based on the UCC's Statement of Faith that gives us opportunities to unpack what we said, what we believe, and how we live out those convictions. The 6pm gatherings in the large classroom across from the gender-assigned restrooms will feature members and friends of our congregation talking about their faith journeys and how parts of the Statement of Faith speak to them. The UCC Statement will be divided into five sections, and each week someone will offer a talk modeled on the talks given at the Journey spiritual renewal retreat, followed by opportunities for reflection. This will be a great chance to hear from those in our community about how they experience and live out their life of faith in and through Friends Church. All are welcome.

**IGLESIA ZOAR LUNCH AND Q&A PRESENTATION:** Please plan to join us on Sunday, January 28, after the 10:30 service at Friends Church for lunch and then a presentation by Pastor Jose Gutierrez of Iglesia Zoar, which ministers to Mexican families economically stranded in border settlements near Reynosa, by providing them church services, job training, daily nutrition, and permaculture-based gardening instruction. Learn more about how Friends Church can be a part of this blessed ministry.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO AN INFORMATIONAL SESSION ABOUT SARC:** The Sexual Assault Resource Center of the Brazos Valley does important work in the Bryan/College Station and surrounding counties to provide a safe space for those impacted by sexual violence. As Christians we are called to healing in our communities. Please prayerfully consider learning more about the work and impact of this nonprofit in our community. Katy Stewart is hosting an informational session with SARC BV and is looking for friends in her church home to learn more about this organization. There is no obligation to attend. This is an informational session only with a request to follow-up a day or two after for reaction to what is learned. The informational session is at 6pm on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> and will last only an hour at a confidential location in the Brazos Valley. Please contact Katy for more information [katydstewart@gmail.com](mailto:katydstewart@gmail.com).

**FAMILY PROMISE COMFORT FOOD COOK-OFF:** Comfort Food Cook-off is set for Friday February 2! Come join us for a time of yummy food and fellowship. This is the primary fundraiser for Family Promise. Tickets will be on sale after church on Sundays in the fellowship area. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for children (12 and under). This year the event will be held at A&M Church of Christ from 6-9 pm. Contact Anne Wehrly [awehrly@suddenlink.net](mailto:awehrly@suddenlink.net) if you have questions.

**INQUIRY CLASS SCHEDULED:** Inquiry Class #1 will be held on Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup> right after the 10:30am church service. Lunch will be served and we will begin this series getting to know each other and finding out how some of our members found their way to Friends Church on their spiritual journey. We look forward to seeing you there. Please register on the Church website at <http://www.friends-ucc.org/index.php/event-registration-list> so we can plan for any dietary or child care needs. This will be the beginning of a three class series with the second and third classes taking place on March 4th and April 8<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions please contact Linda Fitzwater at [fitzh2o@industryinet.com](mailto:fitzh2o@industryinet.com) or talk with Pastor Dan or Pastor Trent.

**BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY WORKSHOP:** On Saturday, February 24, 2018, 8:30am – 5pm, the Episcopal Health Foundation is providing a FREE workshop that introduces participants to a comprehensive approach for understanding the dynamics that cause and maintain poverty from the individual to the systemic levels. Bridges Out of Poverty uses the lens of economic class and provides concrete tools and strategies for a community to prevent, reduce, and alleviate poverty; it is designed to provide a broad overview of concepts. All training materials will be provided for the workshop, which takes place at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 906 George Bush Dr., 0. Light breakfast and a lunch will be provided. To register, visit this link and complete the form: <https://tinyurl.com/ygkcmkyk>. If you have questions, contact Melodee Toles at [832-658-2662](tel:832-658-2662).