



**Friends Church**

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*



*The Wise Men's Dream*

Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, inspired by Matthew 2:1-12

January 5, 2025

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 Leader: Kartina Stewart  
Communion Steward: Naomi Liebknecht  
Greeter: Alex Cannon

Next Sunday, January 12:  
Lay Leaders: Dinah Anderson & Holly Scott  
Greeters: Carolyn Young

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 After Christmas*

Christmas is not just a day; it is a season! Christmas Day is the festival commemorating the birth of the Christ Child, observed primarily on December 25 among billions of people around the world. The 12 days that follow are known as the Christmas season or Christmastide.

### **SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION:** Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, NRSV

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more. May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service. For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

### **QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:**

“Christ taught us repeatedly and in the most vividly possible terms that the proper role of a follower of his is to reach out in an unselfish and humble way to those who are different from us and in real need.” —Jimmy Carter to Baptists Today (now Good Faith Magazine)

### **CHIMING OF THE TRINITY**

### **WORDS OF WELCOME**

Trent Williams

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

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

Katrina Stewart

One: We come to this place—each of us on our own path.

All: **The path is winding, and the path is not always clear,  
and the path changes, but we are here.**

One: God is walking us home.

All: **What a gift it is to not walk alone.  
Let us worship Holy God.**

**\*OPENING HYMN** - No. 158 O Morning Star, How Clear and Bright *Wie Schön Leuchtet*

**\*INVOCATION**

Katrina Stewart

**SERVICE OF BAPTISM FOR  
HENLEY RYAN HUTTO-SCHULTZ & XARYEL (“XARI”) ABDIEL SANTIAGO**

*At this time, the children are invited to come to the front for a closer view of the baptism*

**The Welcome**

Dan De Leon

Pastor: They were bringing children to Jesus that Jesus might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, Jesus was indignant, and said to them...

**All: Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the realm of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the realm of God like a child shall not enter it.**

Pastor: And Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them.

**The Address**

Trent Williams

**Questions for the Parents**

Brooke Dooley

**\*Congregational Assent**

Dan De Leon

Pastor: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the ones about to be baptized, as they live and grow in Christ?

**All: We promise our love, support and care.**

**Prayer of Baptism**

Trent Williams

**Act of Baptism**

**\*Song of Praise**

**\*Prayer for the Baptized**

Brooke Dooley

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: **And also with you!**

## EPISTLE READING

Ephesians 3:1-12, NRSV

Katrina Stewart

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

**SPECIAL MUSIC:** How Far Is It to Bethlehem? - English Carol, arranged by Mark Hayes (Ericalynn Cannon, soprano)

## GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:1-12, CEB

Dan De Leon

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.”

When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

You, Bethlehem, land of Judah, by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah, because from you will come one who governs, who will shepherd my people Israel.” Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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

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

## THE MESSAGE

“The Trouble with Jesus”

Dan De Leon

## MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

## INVITATION TO SHARE

Katrina Stewart

## **OFFERTORY**

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at [bit.ly/givetofriendsucc](http://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)**

Trent Williams

God of new beginnings, we offer these gifts out of love. The world will tell us to keep our money to ourselves; but just as the Magi made a different choice, we make a different choice. Instead, we give what we have, trusting that when we live like we belong to one another, we will see a better world. So take these gifts and use them for your good. Amen.

## **CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Trent Williams

## **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 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**

Brooke Dooley

**\*CLOSING HYMN** - No. 160 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World)  
*Elderkin*

**\*BENEDICTION**

Dan De Leon

**POSTLUDE**

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: How Great Our Joy (Inspired by Clarke's "Trumpet Tune") -Traditional German Melody,  
arranged by Faye López  
Offertory: O Thou Joyful, O Thou Wonderful - Tattersall's Psalmody, arranged by Victor Labenske  
Communion: The First Noel - Traditional English Carol, arranged by Bernadine Johnson  
Postlude: Go, Tell It on the Mountain - Spiritual, arranged by Melody Bober

Scriptures for Baptism of Christ Sunday, January 12, 2025: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 & Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

## 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

**WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY WITH WOMEN, JAN 8:** Wonderful Wednesday with Women will meet on January 8 at 5pm at The Owl Pub & Grill in Bryan. This is a casual, come-and-go event. All are welcome! Contact Stacy De Leon ([stacybdeleon@gmail.com](mailto:stacybdeleon@gmail.com)) for more information.

**GUYZ BREAKFAST, JAN 11:** 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

**CHRISTMAS FOR OUR NEIGHBORS:** The Justice & Mission Ministry of Friends Church would like to thank all of you who contributed the food and gas cards that our pastors distribute to folks in need in our community. This year, through your donations, \$1,340 in gift cards was received. This bounty is on top of the 65 children (served by Brazos Co. Child Protective Services) that our church sponsored with Christmas presents. Thanks, Friends, for your generosity!



**SENIOR PASTOR OUT OF THE OFFICE, JAN 12-18:** Pastor Dan will be away from the church, Jan. 12-18, attending a retreat for senior pastors of multi-staff United Church of Christ congregations, and then taking a couple of vacation days. During that time, for any pastoral needs, please contact Pastor Trent or Pastor Brooke.

**MENTAL HEALTH WALKS W/ PASTOR BROOKE ON WINTER BREAK:** Pastor Brooke will be taking a break from the weekly Mental Health Walks for the Winter Break, but we will return to our usual 4:30pm walks at Wolf Pen Creek Park on January 14, 2025.

**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.

**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.

**MIGRANT JUSTICE NETWORK FORMING IN BCS:** The Brazos Sanctuary Coalition (BSC), formed by Friends Church and other churches, non-profits and individuals in 2017, is re-organizing as the Migrant Justice Network (MJN) in preparation for the challenges the community may face in the coming months. The MJN is an interfaith group standing publicly in solidarity with members of our community at risk for detention and deportation. We will serve as witness to the injustices of the immigration system by accompanying and supporting our immigrant brothers and sisters and working to keep families safe and together. If you would like to be informed and updated on our plans and opportunities for you to contribute and participate, beginning in January 2025, please email [migrantjusticenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:migrantjusticenetwork@gmail.com) and we will add you to the announcements list.

## 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

**YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING, JAN 25:** NAMI Brazos Valley (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will be offering a Mental Health First Aid Training focused on youth. This training is for parents/guardians of youth, or anyone who works with youth regularly. It will cover topics such as anxiety, depression, substance use, psychosis related disorders, neurodivergence, eating disorders, suicide prevention, and self-care. The training will be held in the double classroom on Saturday, January 25, 8:30am-5:00pm. Scan the QR Code to register, or contact Pastor Brooke for questions: [pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org](mailto:pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org).



**LINDA COATS BOOK CLUB, JAN 27:** For January, join the book club for the last meeting of the year. We will be reading Anthony Ray Hinton's *The Sun Does Shine*. Join us for discussion at 6:30pm

# 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.