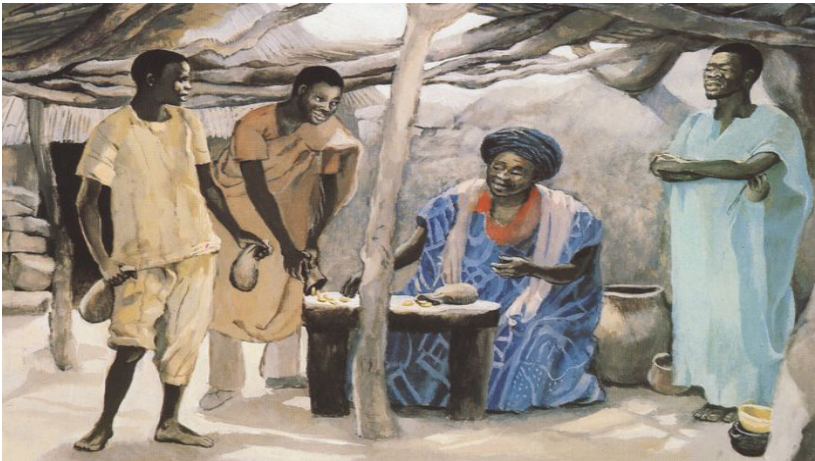




Friends Church
An Open & Affirming Congregation



Parable of the Three Servants, or, The Talents
JESUS MAFA (1973)

September 22, 2024
II: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: Diane Simpson & Holly Scott
Greeters: Greeters: Kathy Yeager & Dwight Roblyer

Next Sunday, Sept 29
Lay Leaders: Susan Fontaine & Kathy Miller
Greeters: Megan Alvear & Lanette and Rick Schulte

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.

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.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The season after Pentecost is also considered Ordinary Time. It indicates the parts of the liturgical year that are not included in the major seasons of the church calendar. Ordinary Time can be understood in terms of the living out of Christian faith and the meaning of Christ's resurrection in ordinary life. It may be referred to as the "green season," as green is the liturgical color for this period of time in the church year.

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

-John Wesley

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Brooke Dooley

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

***CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)**

Holly Scott

One: Here, our Beloved speaks to us; the voice of our Beloved sounds in our hearts:

All: Calling us to generous acts, to share the gifts we have been given.

One: Now, our Beloved speaks to us; the voice of our Beloved sounds in our land:

All: Calling us to generous acts, to open our hearts to all in need.

One: In every place, in every moment, our Beloved speaks to us; the voice of our Beloved sounds in all creation:

All: Calling us to generous acts, to stand with God's people: the least, the lost, the little, the last.

***OPENING HYMN** - No. 565 God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

Austrian Hymn

***INVOCATION**

Holly Scott

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Brooke Dooley

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.**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Dan De Leon

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (RESPONSIVE)

One: Creator of us all, we sometimes forget:

All: We forget that we are not alone, we forget that you made us, we forget that we have had help along the way, we forget to ask for what we need.

One: Embodied God, remind us that we are surrounded.

All: We are surrounded by the people you have created, and by the many gifts you have given them to share. Remind us of our own gifts, and the ways we may use them in community.

One: Suffering Savior, we confess that in our own struggle to survive,

All: We have ignored other communities. We have forgotten that they too have the right to survive. Make us mindful. Make us compassionate. Help us to see you in one another. In your name we pray, Amen.

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!**

*HYMN OF RESPONSE - No. 593 Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift Every Voice

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 25:14-30, CEB

Holly Scott

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who was leaving on a trip. He called his servants and handed his possessions over to them. To one he gave five valuable coins, and to another he gave two, and to another he gave one. He gave to each servant according to that servant’s ability. Then he left on his journey.

“After the man left, the servant who had five valuable coins took them and went to work doing business with them. He gained five more. In the same way, the one who had two valuable coins gained two more. But the servant who had received the one valuable coin dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money.

“Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five valuable coins came forward with five additional coins. He said, ‘Master, you gave me five valuable coins. Look, I’ve gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Excellent! You are a good and faithful servant! You’ve been faithful over a little. I’ll put you in charge of much. Come, celebrate with me.’

“The second servant also came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two valuable coins. Look, I’ve gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done! You are a good and faithful servant. You’ve been faithful over a little. I’ll put you in charge of much. Come, celebrate with me.’

“Now the one who had received one valuable coin came and said, ‘Master, I knew that you are a hard man. You harvest grain where you haven’t sown. You gather crops where you haven’t spread seed. So I was afraid. And I hid my valuable coin in the ground. Here, you have what’s yours.’

“His master replied, ‘You evil and lazy servant! You knew that I harvest grain where I haven’t sown and that I gather crops where I haven’t spread seed? In that case, you should have turned my money over to the bankers so that when I returned, you could give me what belonged to me with interest. Therefore, take from him the valuable coin and give it to the one who has ten coins. Those who have much will receive more, and they will have more than they need. But as for those who don’t have much, even the little bit they have will be taken away from them. Now take the worthless servant and throw him out into the farthest darkness.’

“People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

CHORAL ANTHEM - I Was Here - Gary Burr, Hillary Scott, and Victoria Shaw; arranged by Alan Billingsley

You will notice me; I’ll be leaving my mark like initials carved in an old oak tree. You wait and see. Maybe I’ll write like Twain wrote, maybe I’ll paint like Van Gogh, cure the common cold. I don’t know, but I’m ready to start, ‘cause I know in my heart I wanna do something that matters, say something different; something that sets the whole world on its ear. I wanna do something better with the time I’ve been given. And I wanna try to touch a few hearts in this life, leave nothing less than something that says, “I was here.” I will prove you wrong. If you think I’m all talk, you’re in for a shock, ‘cause this dream’s too strong. And, before too long, maybe I’ll compose symphonies, maybe I’ll fight for world peace, ‘cause I know it’s my destiny to leave more than a trace of myself in this place. I wanna do something that matters, say something different; something that sets the whole world on its ear. I wanna do something better with the time I’ve been given. And I wanna try to touch a few hearts in this life, leave nothing less than something that says, “I was here.”

I wanna do something that matters, say something different; something that sets the whole world on its ear. I wanna do something better with the time I’ve been given. And I know that I will do more than just pass through this life. I’ll leave nothing less than something that said, “I was here.”

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 25:1-9, NRSV

Trent Williams

The Lord said to Moses: Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering; from all whose hearts prompt them to give you shall receive the offering for me. This is the offering that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue, purple, and crimson yarns and fine linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, fine leather, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and for the breastpiece. And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

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

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

THE MESSAGE

Building the Future Together

Trent Williams

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

FAITH IN ACTION MOMENT

Tiny Hope Village

Cady Engler

INVITATION TO SHARE

Holly Scott

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at 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 & 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

Dan De Leon

***CLOSING HYMN** - No. 575 O for a World

Azmon

***BENEDICTION**

Trent Williams

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow - Louis Bourgeois, arranged by Phillip Keveren
Offertory: Two Spirituals ("I Want to Be a Christian" and "What a Morning") - Eugene Butler
Postlude: All Creatures of Our God and King - Music from Geistliche Kirchengesang, arranged by Phillip Keveren

Scriptures for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 29, 2024: Psalm 39:7-13; Genesis 32:24-32

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

LINDA COATS BOOK CLUB, SEPT 26: For September, the book club will be reading Matthew Desmond’s *Poverty, By America*. Join us for discussion at 6:30pm

FAMILY PROMISE, SEPT 29-OCT 5: Family Promise of Bryan-College Station (FPBCS), a ministry of Friends Church since 2008, has as its mission “to help homeless children and their families achieve sustainable independence.” Friends Church will be hosting two families at the Family Promise Center for a week starting Sunday, September 29th. You can be a part of this vital ministry. Options for helping: prepare a meal, provide breakfast & lunch food, or spend the night at the Family Promise Center. Learn more about Family Promise and sign up on Sunday morning in the fellowship area after worship. Direct questions or offers to volunteer to Mary Howell mhowell61@gmail.com or Sally Manthei manthei_sally@aol.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. You can also sign up online here: bit.ly/FriendsGreeter.

“SCRIPTURE & AMERICAN SACRED TEXTS”: MORNING MANNA SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES: In conjunction with our September sermon series “Untaught History,” join us on Sunday mornings at 10:00am from August 25 through September 29 for a series that will explore historic American works in conversation with scripture.

September 22: The Byrds’ “Turn, Turn, Turn” & Ecclesiastes/Biblical Wisdom Writings

September 29: Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” & Paul’s Prison Epistles

SEPTEMBER SERMON SERIES: This month, our preachers are offering a special sermon series: “Untaught History: Reparations, Resoluteness, Resistance, and Redemption.” Our former school days of selective history lessons that left out countless stories and altered others, and these present days of banned books and whitewashed curriculums beckon us to learn some of that untaught history as a testament to our faith in Jesus’ insistence that “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” Pastor Brooke, Pastor Trent, and Pastor Dan will explore stories from the post-Reconstruction era, the Holocaust, the civil rights and gay rights movements, and how God is still speaking through that largely untaught history. Here’s a snapshot of the remaining Sundays...

Sept 22, Pastor Trent: “Building the Future Together,” Exodus 25:1-9

Sept 29, Pastor Brooke: “The Bridge Which Christ Had Built,” Genesis 32: 24-32

So, bring a friend and join us every Sunday in September for some “Untaught History.”

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 (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.

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.

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: “All I need is coffee; all we need are volunteers to make it!”

Sign up via sheet on kitchen counter, at bit.ly/coffeeatfriends or email Jan at 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

FABULOUS AT ANY AGE - CRAFTING WITH LANETTE, OCT 1: Are you Fabulous at Any Age (and, really, aren't we all?)? Then join us for Crafting with Lanette on Tuesday, October 1, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Sanctuary. No experience required and no special skills needed, just come and have fun! All supplies will be provided. If folks are interested, we'll go together for lunch afterwards.

FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS, OCT 4: First Friday with Friends is held in conjunction with Downtown Bryan's First Friday activities. We have a meet up at Blackwater Draw and always have a few people there for the 5:30-7:30 timeframe. Some folks stay at Blackwater all evening and others stop by on their way to or from dining and playing in downtown Bryan.

FALL MEETING OF THE HEART OF TEXAS ASSOCIATION, OCT 5: Faith United Church of Christ in New Braunfels is hosting our Heart of Texas Association's Fall Meeting on Saturday, October 5th. Registration begins at 9:30am followed by Worship & Meeting at 10am (onsite and online). The meeting includes an Ecclesiastical Council for our own Member in Discernment Kyle Riley. Register here: <https://bit.ly/4d8t29g>.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION, OCT 6: Voter Registration and information table in front of church, October 6, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Volunteer Deputy Registrars will be staffing the table to register voters and answer all your questions about upcoming elections and deadlines.

Friends Congregational Church United Church of Christ

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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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.