



Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



Three Temptations
Cara B. Hochhalter (2019)

March 9, 2025

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: Jodie Robinson & Mo Bertrand
Greeters: Carolyn Young & Lanette and Rick Schulte

Next Sunday, March 16:
Lay Leaders: Becky Burks
Communion Stewards: Kathy Yeager
Greeters:

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.

First Sunday in Lent

Lent is the season of renewal and reflection—a time when we remember that we are only human, broken yet beloved.

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16, NRSV

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Mo Bertrand

One: We cry out to the God of our ancestors:

All: Deliver us from the ways of evil and set us on your path of Love.

One: For God is our refuge, the One in whom we find our freedom.

All: She companions us through grief.

One: She leads us through valleys of despair.

All: She rises up when oppression bears down.

One: God will see us through the wilderness

All: and lead us together to life abundant.

***OPENING HYMN** - No. 205 Forty Days and Forty Nights

Heinlein

***INVOCATION**

Mo Bertrand

An asterisk indicates that the congregation is invited to stand in body or spirit.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kathy Miller

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.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH (UNISON)

Dan De Leon

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Dan De Leon

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: And also with you!

***HYMN OF RESPONSE: Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley**

Lonesome Valley

1 Je - sus walked this lone - some val - ley, he had to
2 Je - sus prayed for his dis - ci - ples; he prayed a -
3 Je - sus died on Cal - vary's moun - tain; he died a -
4 Je - sus rose from death's dark pris - on; he lives a -

walk it by him - self; O, no - bod - y else could walk it
lone for you and me. O, no - bod - y else could bear such
lone for you and me. O, no - bod - y else could die for
gain for you and me. O, no - bod - y else could bring us

for him, he had to walk it by him - self.
sor - row; he prayed a - lone for you and me.
sin - ners; he had to die for you and me.
vic - tory; he is a - live to set us free.

HEBREW BIBLE READING

Deuteronomy 26: I-II, CEB

Mo Bertrand

Once you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you take possession of it and are settled there, take some of the early produce of the fertile ground that you have harvested from the land the Lord your God is giving you, and put it in a basket. Then go to the location the Lord your God selects for his name to reside. Go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him: “I am declaring right now before the Lord my God that I have indeed arrived in the land the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.”

The priest will then take the basket from you and place it before the Lord your God’s altar. Then you should solemnly state before the Lord your God:

“My father was a starving Aramean. He went down to Egypt, living as an immigrant there with few family members, but that is where he became a great nation, mighty and numerous. The Egyptians treated us terribly, oppressing us and forcing hard labor on us. So we cried out for help to the Lord, our ancestors’ God. The Lord heard our call. God saw our misery, our trouble, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with awesome power, and with signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land—a land full of milk and honey. So now I am bringing the early produce of the fertile ground that you, Lord, have given me.”

Set the produce before the Lord your God, bowing down before the Lord your God. Then celebrate all the good things the Lord your God has done for you and your family—each one of you along with the Levites and the immigrants who are among you.

HANDBELL ANTHEM: I’m Just a Poor Wayfaring Stranger - American Folk Tune, arranged by Tammy Waldrop

GOSPEL READING

Luke 4:1-13, NRSV

Brooke Dooley

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

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

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

THE MESSAGE

Brooke Dooley

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

INVITATION TO SHARE

Mo Bertrand

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;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Trent Williams

God who accompanies, God who delivers, God who promises renewal, here we are. We bring all of who we are and all of what we have to the work of your Love. May your Spirit receive these gifts and work in us to set your Justice in motion. Amen.

***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. 489 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Evan

***BENEDICTION**

Brooke Dooley

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Forty Days and Forty Nights (Aus der Tiefe Rufe Dich) - Music attributed to Martin Herbst

Offertory: What Wondrous Love Is This - Arranged by John Carter

Postlude: Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days - Music from Day's *Psalter*

Scriptures for the Second Sunday in Lent, March 16, 2025: Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

EVENTS THIS WEEK

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.

GETTING CONNECTED AT FRIENDS

FAMILIES OF ADOPTED AND FOSTER CARE CHILDREN INFORMATIONAL SESSION, MARCH 9: To all our Friends Church families who have foster and/or adopted children, we are currently in the process of establishing a support group for those who understand the unique experiences and challenges that these children and families face. If you are interested in being part of this ministry, there will be an informational session following the 11am service on 3/9 in the double classroom. This is a great opportunity to share your ideas for how to support one another and your hopes for this ministry.

LENTEN MEDITATION, MARCH 11: On Tuesdays during Lent, you are invited to the Friends Church sanctuary to start your morning with centering meditation. At 7:30am on Tuesdays, Mar. 11th, 18th, 25th, April 1st, 8th and 15th, 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 Easter.

WALL OF GIVING - YOUTH MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER, MARCH 9: As you may know, the Friends Youth Group will travel to Denver, CO this summer for a mission trip with Be The Neighbor to focus on “Environmental Justice.” On this trip, participants will immerse themselves in the concept of environmental justice through a range of interactive and reflective activities. The Denver trip offers an in-depth exploration of environmental justice, giving participants the chance to actively contribute to local initiatives while also reflecting on their own role in creating a more sustainable and equitable world. It’s going to be a great trip, but we need your help raising money to cover the cost of our chaperones’ registration, travel expenses for all youth and chaperones, and scholarships for those who need assistance to attend.

The youth group will hold a Wall of Giving fundraiser for four consecutive Sundays starting on February 16th (before & after both services) in the fellowship area of the sanctuary. The Wall of Giving is a display with 100 envelopes marked with dollar amounts from \$1 to \$100. Those who wish to participate in the fundraiser will select an envelope based on the amount they want to contribute. That amount can be paid either with cash, check or via Venmo (to 979.307.8860 or @friendsucc) with a note that specifies that the money is for the ‘Youth Mission Trip.’ Inside the envelopes, and in exchange for the contribution, the youth are offering ‘I Owe You’s’ (Ex. One postcard from the mission trip or one selfie from the mission trip). As always, thank you for your support of our youth group!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEVOTIONAL BOOKS FOR LENT ARE HERE!: Devotional books for lent! Lent begins Ash Wednesday, March 5th, 2024. Copies of the UCC’s Lenten Daily Devotional booklet, INTO THE DEEP, are available for pickup in the Narthex; one per household, please. The electronic version (pdf) may be purchased individually at thepilgrimpress.com.

FRIENDS WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Join our Friends Church worship team! We are in need of additional folks to help on Sunday mornings to serve as greeters, lay leaders and communion stewards to make our worship services flow smoothly. Sign up with these links.
9am Service bit.ly/0900worship 11am Service bit.ly/1100worship.

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, know if we can add you to our list.

MEET RHAG--A NEW PROGRAM OF JUSTICE AND MISSION: The Justice & Mission Committee of Friends Church is announcing the formation of a new program called the Reproductive Health Access Group—or RHAG for short!

Since our church became a Reproductive Freedom Congregation in January of 2023, we have been working to fulfill that commitment, sponsoring a legislative bill watch, hosting a speaker on the theology of reproductive justice, and serving as a pick up point for emergency contraceptives. Now RHAG wants to explore ways our congregation can increase access to reproductive health information, services and products locally, especially for those in our community who may not have the means or ability to find these resources on their own.

If you would like to learn more, email justice-mission@friends-ucc.org or see Kristin Harper or Holly Scott. And if you'd like to join us in the work, mark your calendars for Sunday, March 30 at 2:00 pm in the double classroom and plan to attend our next meeting.

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/friendschurchcoffee 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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR ENGLISH-ONLY SPEAKERS: “KNOW YOUR RIGHTS” TRAINING, MARCH 17: On Monday, March 17, 6:30 - 7:30 pm at Friends: Know Your Rights Training for English-speakers to disseminate information to local employers. Sign up at <https://bit.ly/KnowYourRights17>.

The Migrant Justice Network supports the idea that educating immigrant workers and their employers about their rights is the best way we have to protect both and ensure they are all treated fairly. In this training, you will learn about the rights both employers and workers have in case ICE approaches their place of business. You'll be given packets of KYR information and a list of local businesses--hotels, restaurants and other small businesses--to visit and offer this information to the managers or employers. Contact us at migrantjusticenetwork@gmail.com if you have questions or problems accessing the sign-up. Try to respond by Wednesday, March 12 so we can adequately prepare.

LINDA COATS BOOK CLUB, MARCH 27: Linda Coats Book Club will meet on Thursday, March 27th at 6:30pm. Our book will be Run by Ann Patchett. Contact Becky Burks at spirit_develop@friends-ucc.org for more details.

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*)
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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.