



Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



Praying Hands

September 1, 2024

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 Leaders: Diane Simpson & Ryan Womack
Communion Stewards: Susan Fontaine & Charity Stokes
Greeters: Dwight Roblyer & Adrian Capetillo

Next Sunday, Sept 8

Lay Leaders: Larry Dooley & Becky Burks
Greeters: Megan Alvear & Sydney Zentell

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.

Fifteenth 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.

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION: Colossians 3:13, NIV

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

QUOTE FOR MEDITATION:

"Forgiveness or release is designed to bring change. It accomplishes its purpose when it opens up a future that the wrongdoing from the past had closed off."

Craig Koester, Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Brooke Dooley

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Ryan Womack

One: Worker God, whose hands built the earth,
molded our bodies, and sowed the stars across the sky,

**All: we gather in your presence this morning
with praise and thanksgiving for your mighty deeds.**

One: Meet us here, Worker God;

**All: strengthen our hearts and our hands to work with you
in the building of a world filled with justice and peace.**

***OPENING HYMN** - No. 516 O Grant Us, God, a Little Space (vv. 1, 4, 5) *Winchester Old*

***INVOCATION** Ryan Womack

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Trent Williams

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 Brooke Dooley

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON) Brooke Dooley

Creator God, you made us to be neighbors, members of one family blessed with great diversity.

You created us to be helpers and friends to one another, entrusting to us your justice and your joy.

Yet we have denied justice and joy to many, creating worlds of poverty, pain, lost opportunities, and absence of hope.

In so many ways, we break each other's hearts. Still, you do not reject us.

We ask your forgiveness and pray to be transformed.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE Brooke Dooley

***PASSING OF THE PEACE** Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: And also with you!

***HYMN OF RESPONSE:** No. 590 Spirit of Jesus, If I Love My Neighbor

Benjamin

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Deuteronomy 15:1-11, NRSV

Ryan Womack

Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts. And this is the manner of the remission: every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the community, because the Lord's remission has been proclaimed. Of a foreigner you may exact it, but you must remit your claim on whatever any member of your community owes you. There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the Lord is sure to bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession to occupy, if only you will obey the Lord your God by diligently observing this entire commandment that I command you today. When the Lord your God has blessed you, as he promised you, you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you. If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, "The seventh year, the year of remission, is near," and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."

CHORAL ANTHEM - Set Me As a Seal - René Clausen

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death.
Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:9-13, NRSV

Dan De Leon

“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

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

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

THE MESSAGE

“Debts, Debtors, and Callie House”

Dan De Leon

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

INVITATION TO SHARE

Ryan Womack

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

Brooke Dooley

OBSERVANCE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Trent Williams

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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

Trent Williams

***CLOSING HYMN** - No. 588 Let Justice Flow like Streams

St. Thomas

*BENEDICTION

Dan De Leon

POSTLUDE

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Instrumental Music:

Prelude: Come, Christians, Join to Sing - Spanish Melody, arranged by Matt Limbaugh
Offertory: How Can I Keep From Singing - Rev. Robert Lowry
Communion: Just As I Am - William B. Bradbury, arranged by Joel Raney
Postlude: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty - Music from *Erneuerten Gesangbuch*

Scriptures for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 8, 2024: Jeremiah 31:27-34; Luke 18:1-8

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

FIRST FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS, SEPT 6: 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.

20/30 SOMETHINGS POTLUCK & GAME NIGHT, SEPT 6: The Friends Church 20/30 Somethings will be gathering at Pastor Brooke’s house for a potluck and game night on Friday, 9/6, 6pm-8pm. Bring a dish or beverage, and your favorite game to play. We’ll also take some time to plan upcoming events for the 20/30 Somethings this fall. Contact Pastor Brooke for details and questions: pastorbrooke@friends-ucc.org

SNACK COLLECTION, SEPT 8: In honor of our “Friday Food Distribution Ministry” which we will celebrate on September 8th, the Sunday School will create Healthy Snack Bags to be handed out to families with children during our Friday Food Distribution. We are requesting donations of individually packaged, shelf stable, no added sugar or artificial sugar, healthy snacks that we can include such as: packaged popcorn, apple sauce, raisins, seaweed, fruit cups. Please place donations in the bin in the hall by the office or the bin in the narthex.

YOUTH SNACK ACTIVITY, SEPT 8: Join us to make snack bags and cards on Sept 8th from 10-11am in the divided classroom.

SPECIAL SERVICE WITH OUR NEXTDOOR NEIGHBORS, SEPT 8: Our neighbors at Peace Lutheran Church have invited Friends Church to join them in their sanctuary for worship at 9:30am on Sunday, September 8th. The special service will celebrate the “Friday Food Distribution Ministry” that Friends Church and Peace Lutheran have shared for over four years. Friends choir members are invited to sing with Peace’s choir, both churches’ pastors will lead worship, our own Anne Wehrly will give a “Temple Talk”, and an offering will be taken up in support of the food distribution ministry. NOTE: The 9am worship service will not be offered at Friends Church on September 8th. Instead, all are invited to attend worship at Peace Lutheran at 9:30am that morning. However, the 11am worship service at Friends Church will be offered as usual. All are welcome and encouraged to attend both!

INQUIRE + CONNECT, SEPT 8: After the 11pm service, at the Inquire Class you will learn about Friends—our history, our community, our opportunities for engagement—from church members and one of our pastors. The Inquire Class concludes with an invitation to participate in an optional follow-up Connect Class offered in the home of a church member. In the Connect Class you will learn more about the vision and mission of Friends Church, and how you can “connect” with our various opportunities for nurturing your spirituality, seeking social justice, and getting more involved in the life of our community of faith. For more information and to sign up for Inquire + Connect, contact Becky Burks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED LABOR DAY, SEPT 2: The church office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 1 for Labor Day. Normal business hours will resume on Tuesday.

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.

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 1: Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural/The Battle Hymn of the Republic & Genesis, Matthew, the Psalms

September 8: No Sunday School

September 15: Declaration of Rights and Sentiments & Biblical Women

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: For the five Sundays in September, our preachers will offer 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.

Sept 1, Pastor Dan: “Debts, Debtors, and Callie House,” Matthew 6:9-13

Sept 8, Pastor Trent: “Nevertheless, We Persist,” Luke 18:1-8

Sept 15, Pastor Dan: “Laughter: Hope’s Last Weapon in the Holocaust,” Genesis 22:1-14

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 at Friends Church 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 Ryan Womack: 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: Do you enjoy having coffee/hot beverages available at Sunday morning services? Signup via sheet on counter in kitchen, or Realm (link provided in Friday church email) or by contacting Fellowship@friends-ucc.org. Training available by request.

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 WEDNESDAY WITH WOMEN, SEPT 11: Wonderful Wednesdays with Women will meet at Downtown Uncorked at 1551 Greens Prairie Rd on Wednesday, August 14th from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. This is a casual, come-and-go event. All are welcome! Contact Stacy De Leon if you need more information

GUYZ BREAKFAST, SEPT 14: 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.

NEW MEMBER SUNDAY, SEPT 15: On September 15, we welcome our newest members into the life of Friends Congregational Church. If you are interested in joining Friends Church on New Member Sunday, please contact Senior Pastor Dan De Leon (pastor@friends-ucc.org), Executive Pastor Trent Williams (pastortrent@friends-ucc.org), or Associate Pastor Brooke Dooley (pastor-brooke@friends-ucc.org).

NAACP BRAZOS COUNTY BRANCH BANQUET, SEPT 21: NAACP Brazos County Branch is having a Freedom Fund Banquet September 21, 2024, at 7:00 pm at the Brazos Center. Churches can sponsor a table for \$600. If you would like to help Friends sponsor a table, contact Jackie Womack at moderator@friends-ucc.org. If you would like more information about the event or to purchase tickets for yourself, contact brazoscountynaacp@gmail.com.

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

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.