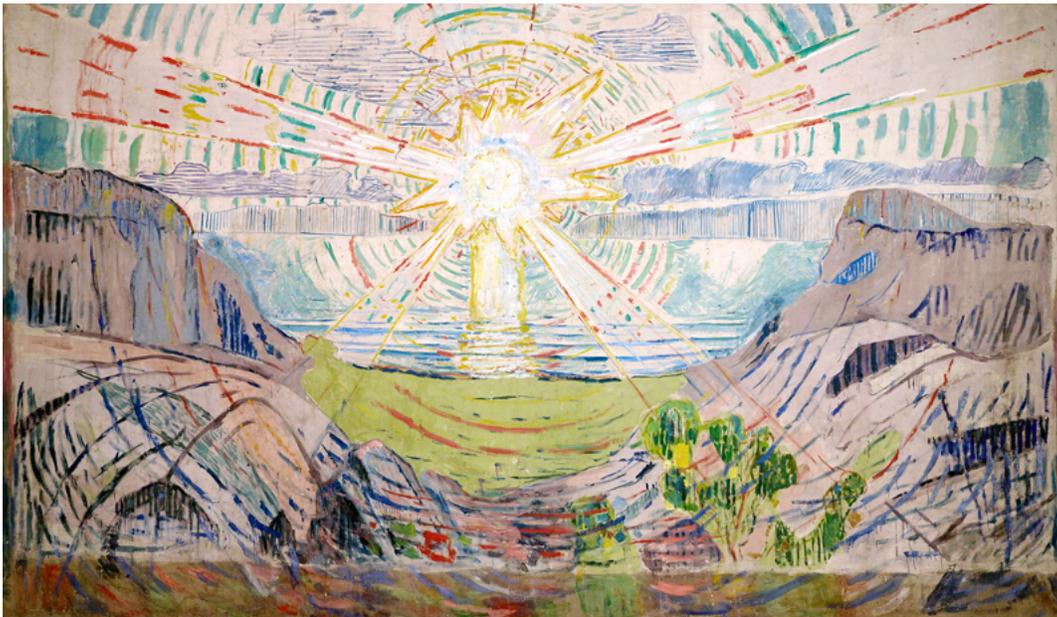


FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

An Open & Affirming Congregation



Munch, Edvard (1863-1944). *Sun*. 1912-1913, Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway.
Painting

March 7, 2021
9:00am
Outdoor at Friends

WELCOME

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.

The Third Sunday in Lent

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

Words in **BOLD** are yours to speak out loud

Gospel Reading for Meditation: Matthew 5:43-48 (CEB)

“You have heard that it was said, *You must love your neighbor* and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who harass you so that you will be acting as children of your Father who is in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love only those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing? Don’t even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore, just as your heavenly Father is complete in showing love to everyone, so also you must be complete.”

Quote for Meditation:

“The most interesting biblical hermeneutic is the one that sees Paul’s statements on women as permanent injunctions for all time, but sees Jesus’ command to love enemies as being so strangely full of nuance that it never seems to apply.” –Benjamin L. Corey

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME & INSTRUCTIONS FOR OUTDOOR WORSHIP

Dan De Leon

*PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP

Linda Fitzwater

One: We stand in the need of the presence of God.

All: ***Our lives can so easily become corrupted by our own greed.***

One: But the Lord has heard our cries and calls us forward on this journey.

All: ***Holy One, guide our steps.***

One: Come, let us worship God who is always with us.

All: ***Let us open our hearts to the healing, restoring love of God. Amen.***

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Linda Fitzwater

OPENING SONG — Come to Me, O Weary Traveler – Austin

Ruthie De Leon, *voice*; Owen Troy, *guitar*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Trent Williams

During the Prayers of the People, you are invited to share your prayers of joy and concern in the comments for the Facebook live stream of the worship service. Those shared prayers will be included in the church's email prayer chain this week.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Trent Williams

One: The Peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: And also with you!

SONG FOR PASSING OF THE PEACE — I've Got Peace Like a River – African American Spiritual

Ruthie De Leon & Kylan Harvey, *voice*; Owen Troy, *guitar*

SPECIAL MUSIC — "Benedictus" from "Mass in B Minor" - Johann Sebastian Bach

Marianne Henry, *violin*; Chris Hoffman, *tenor & piano*

Translation: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

READINGS FROM THE EPISTLES AND THE PSALMS

Dan De Leon

1 Timothy 2:11-15 (NRSV); Psalm 57:1-3 (NRSV)

1 Timothy 2:11-15 (NRSV)

Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

Psalm 57:1-3 (NRSV)

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,
until the destroying storms pass by.
I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfills his purpose for me.
He will send from heaven and save me,
he will put to shame those who trample on me. *Selah*
God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness.

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

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

THE MESSAGE

“Questions and Challenges from the Wounded Truth-tellers”

Dan De Leon

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

INVITATION TO SHARE

Linda Fitzwater

OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Church Office Giving at bit.ly/givetofriends
GivePlus Text to 833-421-0009
Venmo to 979-446-5746 or @friendsucc

**DOXOLOGY No. 780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God the source of all our gifts,
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Trent Williams

THE OBSERVANCE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Brooke Dooley, Trent Williams

THE LORD'S PRAYER, a version by Chance Hunter

Brooke Dooley

**Breath of Life, in whom we live and move and have our being, Your presence fills all of Creation.
May justice and mercy reign, in our lives and in our world.
Today may our bellies be full, our hearts warm, and our fellowship open.
May we reconcile with the people we've hurt, just as we reconcile with the people who've hurt us.
Lead us not into a time of trial, but deliver us from evil.
For wherever grace and community abide, there you are with us; we are not alone.
Blessed be.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

Brooke Dooley

*POSTLUDE

Hymns reprinted with permission — OneLicense #A-730489, CCLI #20046014

Instrumental Music:

**Prelude: "When Morning Gilds the Skies" by Joseph Barnby, arr. by Carol Tornquist*

Offertory: "Under God's Wings" by Ira D. Sandey, arr. by Don Phillips

Communion: "Let Us Break Bread Together", traditional spiritual, arr. by Matt Schinske

**Postlude: "Holy, Holy, Holy" by John B. Dykes, arr. by Kurt Kaiser*

**Performed by Kathy Robbins*

Scriptures for March 14, 2021: Mark 10:32-34; Leviticus 18:19-22; 19:19, 27-28; Psalm 118:5-9

FIRST TIME AT FRIENDS? If you are visiting us today, please let us know. 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.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. Throughout March, we will be learning about how OGHS benefits our neighbors in need. This year, we will receive the OGHS mission offering on three Sundays: March 14, 21, and 28. You can give to OGHS any time by mailing your check to Friends Congregational Church with OGHS in the memo line to the church at 2200 Southwood Drive, College Station, TX 77845, or by giving online [here](#) and selecting Special Offerings from the FUND dropdown menu, and One Great Hour of Sharing from the SUB FUND dropdown menu.

CENTERING PRAYER, 12pm Tuesday, March 9th: Please join us Tuesdays at noon for a time of learning, quiet and prayer. In the weeks of Lent and beyond, we will be learning about the history and practice of centering or contemplative prayer. We will learn to use this practice to help us be in the presence of God and to help us find a calm center. If you have question about this gathering, please contact Jodie Robinson at jocelinbrune@gmail.com. Looking forward to sharing this sacred time with you on Zoom [here](#) [Meeting ID: 845 7858 3517].

NEW CLASS ON FAITH, 6:30pm Thursday, March 11th: “Questioning Faith: The Renewing Process of Faith Reconstruction” is a new class continuing every Thursday until March 25 at 6:30 pm. This class will provide a safe space to discuss the difficult process of deconstructing our faith, and the process of reconstructing it. The class will provide resources and support in regards to how to reconstruct our faith, and the reasons behind its importance. In using these resources, a forum for questions regarding aspects of faith, and ways to answer these questions will be provided. This class aims to empower those looking to reconstruct, and provide tools to undertake this deeply personal journey. Look for the Zoom invite next week.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION , FRIDAY 3 pm: Friends Church and our neighbor church Peace Lutheran are working together to feed hungry folks from our community every Friday. Start 2021 off by volunteering to assist. Share an hour or more of your time between 3:00 and 6:30 pm. Let Anne Wehrly know when you would like to volunteer by emailing awehrly@suddenlink.net. Come to the Peace Lutheran parking lot where the distribution is happening. Wear your mask and prepare to make a tangible difference in the lives of those we are serving. Hope to see you there!

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES AT FRIENDS CHURCH: The next outdoor worship service is tentatively scheduled for 9am on Sunday, March 21. If the Friends Church Decision Meter remains on “orange” or better and the weather permits, join us that morning with your lawn chair and face mask for in-person worship in front of the church building. Moving forward, we hope to have outdoor services on the first and third Sundays of the month, including Easter Sunday, April 4!

FRIENDS BOOK CLUB, Thursday, April 29, 6:30pm: The next Friends Book Club is *Thursday, April 29, at 6:30pm* by Zoom. Rev. Ron Petty will lead us in discussing the book, *Rabbi Jesus*, by Bruce Chilton. Please join us for a fun and informative discussion.

FRIENDS COVID DECISION METER, ORANGE: With a consistent trajectory of lower positivity rates, less hospitalizations, etc. locally, the church’s Decision Meter, which determines our safety measures and protocols related to the pandemic, has gone down to orange, which allows for us to have group gatherings onsite outdoors at Friends Church. We plan to have an outdoor worship service on March 7 at 9am. Here’s hoping we stay on orange and the weather is awesome on March 7. Click [here](#) for more information on how orange and the other color levels affect personal safety protocols, drop-in visitors, staff, etc.

UCC SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Journey Through Lent With the Coalition!: Many of us are wondering how we can observe Lent this year: many of feel that Lent 2020 never ended, and after a year of restrictions and sacrifice we've had enough of "giving up." But Lent is also about giving to: works of love are an ancient spiritual practice during Lent. And so is prayer.

Every weekday morning during Lent and Easter the ONA family will continue to offer a contemplative service of Taizé Morning Prayer at 9 and 11 am (EST) in the Coalition's Zoom Chapel—Monday through Friday. We'll also gather at 10 pm (EST) Sunday for Compline—an ancient experience of prayer, silence and song at the close of day. Each service is about 20 minutes and draws from ancient Christian practices of daily prayer, although in inclusive, non-binary language. Morning Prayer and Compline are sometimes posted on Facebook, but you can always join us on [Zoom](https://zoom.us/j/5556624822) at zoom.us/j/5556624822.

Jesus and Buddha as Brothers - A Virtual Contemplative Retreat for Lent,

Submitted By Rev. Lee Ann Bryce, First Congregational Church UCC, Ft. Worth:

"What if Christ is another name for everything – in its fullness?" -- Richard Rohr

The season of Lent provides an ideal time to nourish mind, body, and spirit by grounding self more deeply in God and in community. As the pandemic stretches on, it's more important than ever to connect in what can feel like an isolated world. This retreat offers a path toward a more profound experience of Lent.

Richard Rohr's language of "Universal Christ," as a word to describe "everything in its fullness," draws us to look beyond a single faith tradition to gain wisdom and understanding. Perhaps religions really are meant to complete rather than compete with each other. Both Jesus and Buddha inspired religious traditions that invite people to awaken. Both teach that peace and freedom may be found by connecting more fully with a deeper way of living. We can help each other live out of that centeredness even in times of struggle and pain.

Given the similar journeys that both Jesus and Buddha model for us, this retreat will be grounded in prayer, meditation, and silence. We will explore key teachings of the Christian and Buddhist traditions, utilizing ancient and modern sacred texts, and teachers such as Richard Rohr and Thich Nhat Hanh. In addition, participants are invited to sign up for a slot in an overnight prayer vigil. (The vigil is optional and designed for those who wish to extend their retreat experience.)

Retreat facilitators: Rev. Lee Ann Bryce; Dharma Teacher Terry Cortès Vega; Cornell Kinderknecht, Musician and Order of Interbeing; and Lisa November, Order of Interbeing.

Dates: Friday, March 12th, 7:00pm-9:00pm & Saturday, March 13th, 7:00am-Noon (Optional overnight prayer vigil)

Cost: Free

To Register:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jesus-and-buddha-as-brothers-registration-141048278197?keep_tld=1

"ROOTED IN LOVE" CAMPAIGN CONCLUDES: This year's stewardship campaign, "Rooted in Love," has wrapped up with 59 households pledging prayer, countless hours of volunteerism, and a collective \$330,640 toward the 2021 Statement of Faith, our general budget. The generosity of Friends Church made it possible for us to pass our dream budget with a 4.5% increase over the previous year. A letter with more information will be in your mailbox by the end of the upcoming week. In the meantime, [click here](#) for all the details from our pastors and Stewardship Chair Carl Fahrenwald.

SOUL FRIENDS SMALL GROUPS: In this new year, we are excited to launch a new semester of Soul Friends small groups. We have several options for deepening connection and spiritual growth in 2021, and we hope you'll take advantage of them. Sign-ups are available [here](https://bit.ly/3pBVFmQ) (<https://bit.ly/3pBVFmQ>) for our ongoing small groups, and we will also be offering occasional opportunities for gathering via a monthly book club, contemplative prayer times, and a special Lenten study that is upcoming. Contact Pastor Trent or Jodie Robinson, Spiritual Life chair, with any questions.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM SEEKS PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS: Friends Church is growing and so is our need to communicate more sophisticated messages on social media, YouTube, and our website. We are looking for people to help with videography/photography to document events and create content for social media, help with creating and editing an announcement reel for the pastoral team, people to schedule events on Facebook and schedule content to social media, and video archivists to edit portions of the online service and make them available to other churches and viewers. Email Anna at evangelism@friends-ucc.org for more information.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CLASS, 10:00AM SUNDAY: The Social Justice Class at Friends Church has concluded its special study and will resume meeting at the regular time of 10am. For more information, please contact Jackie (jackiejowomack@gmail.com).

MORNING MANNA 10AM SUNDAY: Join us for our adult Bible study on Sunday morning at 10:00am on Zoom, Please follow the link, below. We will gather to reconnect, check in with each other, and bring ideas for what we'll study over the coming weeks. All are welcome. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Trent. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82444908275?pwd=VUxnK0tYV2EzRzJhYkkveFo3NFFDdz09>.

ONLINE GATHERING INFORMATION: We will be offering Noonday Check-In & Prayer Times on Monday and Friday, and on Wednesday evening, we will offer a Prayer & Communion Service at 6:30pm. And, as always, the Sunday morning service can be accessed on Facebook live (Friends Congregational Church – UCC) or through the website's streaming service: <https://www.friends-ucc.org/watch-live> or on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxFF8YZUJhOxEodyuN4E2rA>. Mark your calendar, we'll see you online.

TUTORIAL FOR USING ZOOM: Zoom is new for many of us, and we might be having a difficult time getting started using it. Here is a helpful YouTube tutorial to walk you through using Zoom: <https://youtu.be/9isp3qPeQ0E>. Please share this tutorial with anyone having difficulty joining us for our online gatherings.

CHURCH DIRECTORY ONLINE (ChMS): Need a Friends Church online directory? Download the free Church Office Online app and contact the Church office for the domain name and password. It's an easy way to have quick access to the names and contact info for Friends Church people, as well as birthdays and anniversaries! Don't see your info in the online directory? Give us your updated information: office@friends-ucc.org.

FRIENDS CHURCH CARES FUND (FCCF): Friends Church recently received a donation of \$10,000 for the purpose of helping those suffering financial hardships resulting from COVID-19 measures. Friends Church members needing financial assistance are encouraged to request one-time assistance for up to \$1,500 from the FCCF. The FCCF request form can be found on the church's website (www.friends-ucc.org) or by contacting Church Council Vice Moderator Cathy Hansen at vice-moderator@friends-ucc.org. Requests are kept in discretion between the requester and the Vice Moderator, Treasurer, and Senior Pastor.

FRIENDS CHURCH CRISIS FUND: While the FCCF is set aside exclusively to assist with COVID-19-related hardships, the Crisis Fund, established several years ago, is designated to help Friends Church members in financial need for any reason. Should the FCCF run out, our congregation has this fund to further help one another. To contribute to the Crisis Fund, contact Treasurer Theresa Walker at treasurer@friends-ucc.org. To request Crisis Fund assistance, contact the pastors at pastor@friends-ucc.org or pastortrent@friends-ucc.org. Requests remain confidential between the requester and members of Church Council.

STAY CONNECTED WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FRIENDS!: Subscribe to This Week at Friends published every Friday to your email address, and the E-Connection Newsletter published monthly to your email address. You can sign up on our website: www.friends-ucc.org or email the church office: office@friends-ucc.org. Please add e-connection@friends-ucc.org and office@friends-ucc.org to you email address book to ensure delivery.

UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION: If you are not currently receiving Church email correspondence, and would like to, please send a message to the Church office with your name and email address: office@friends-ucc.org, and add e-connection@friends-ucc.org and office@friends-ucc.org to you email address book to ensure delivery.

FRIENDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our Vision:

Rooted in the way of Christ, we strive to be a community of God's radical inclusion and extravagant welcome.

Our Mission:

United by the example of Jesus, we live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Online at 11:00am

FRIENDS CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon, *Senior Pastor*
pastor@friends-ucc.org

The Rev. Trent Williams, *Associate Pastor*
pastortrent@friends-ucc.org

Chris Hoffman, *Director of Music Ministries*
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