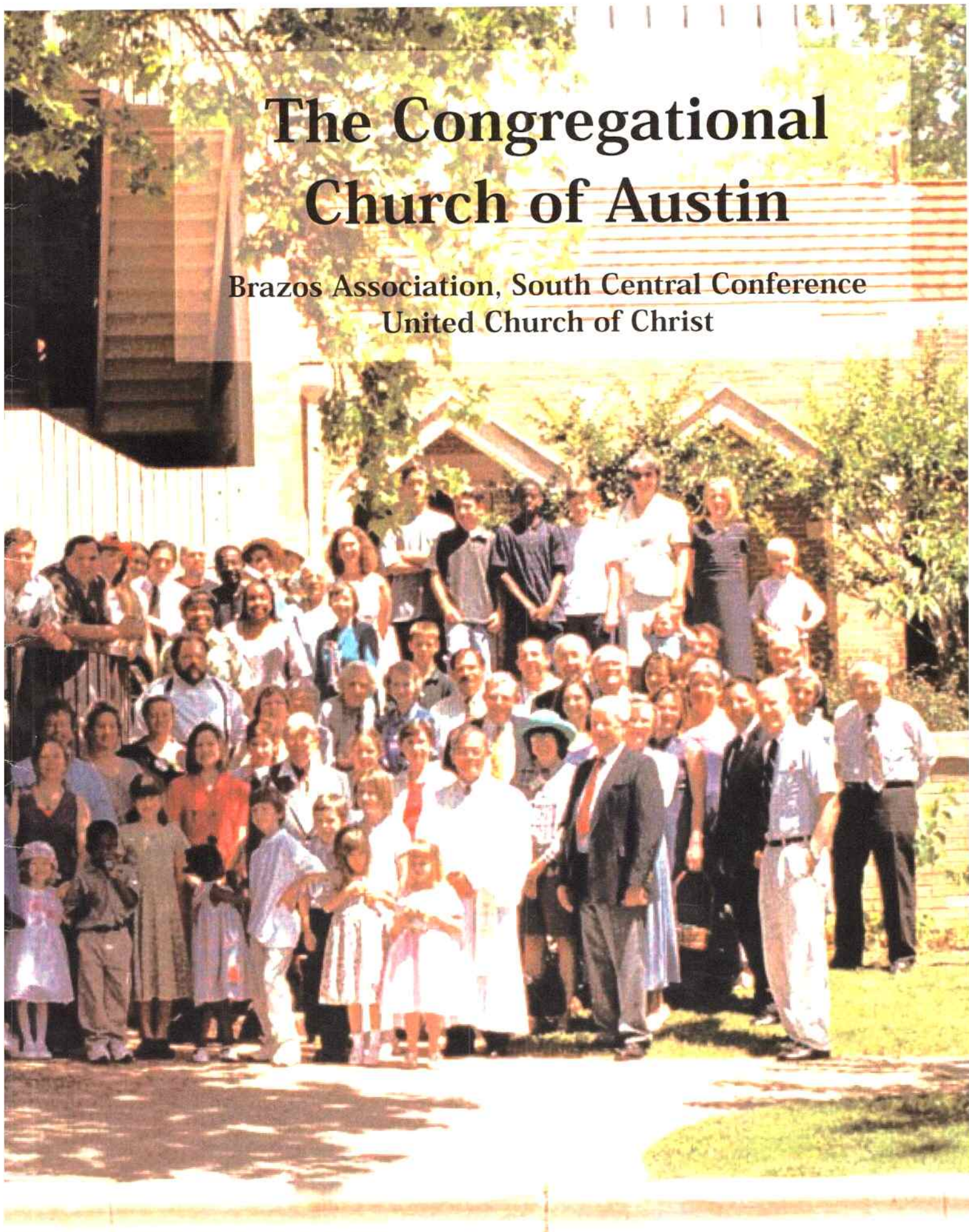


# The Congregational Church of Austin

Brazos Association, South Central Conference  
United Church of Christ



## CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	1
Our Vision	
Our Covenant	
<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>Our Setting</b>	3
<b>Our History</b>	4
<b>Our Present: Who We Are</b>	6
<b>Ministry to Each Other and Our Neighborhood</b>	8
<b>Getting Together, Living Together</b>	9
<b>Ministry to the Wider Community</b>	10
<b>How We Conduct Our Church's Affairs</b>	12
Standing Groups and Committees	
Employees and Officers	
Financial Summary	
<b>Our Future and Our Options</b>	15
<b>Our New Pastor</b>	16
<b>Austin as a Place to Live</b>	17
<b>For More Information</b>	18
<b>Nondiscrimination Statement</b>	19
<b>How to Apply</b>	19



## PREFACE

In this document we present a picture, a profile of our church. Underlying all that we have to say about ourselves, and as a preface to it, we present our vision statement and the covenant that every member signs when joining this church.

## OUR VISION

We are a people united in Christ,  
Singing God's praises,  
Seeking God's ways,  
Serving God's world, and  
Sharing life's journey.



## OUR COVENANT

We, free people in the presence of God, pledge with Him and each other to conduct ourselves in Christ's way as revealed in the Bible, conveyed in the history and tradition of the church, discovered through the laws of nature, heard in the outcry of human need, or spoken in the inner voice. We seek fervently for the additional light which God gives to those who are ready to see, and we rejoice in the opportunity to give of our living for the worthy purposes laid before us.



## INTRODUCTION

The Congregational Church of Austin, located next to the University of Texas campus, has approximately 130 members — university staff and professors, clergy, government employees, teachers, physicians and other health professionals, engineers and scientists, consultants, lawyers, business people, homemakers, musicians and students. Most are pursuing careers or studies and raising families, while others are retired but still involved in service to others, including this church.

Our vision statement describes us well. Theologically there is great diversity among us but, "We are a people united in Christ." No one who enters our doors is a stranger for long; all are welcomed and accepted.

The average level of education here is high; members tend to be well-read and well-traveled and to have open, questioning minds. Student members, while few, are mostly graduate students at UT. This church has always functioned as a place of inspiration and support for those making a decision for the ministry as well as a nurturing center for seminarians, even though there is no UCC seminary nearby.

Over the years, the church has been involved in a variety of projects to serve the wider community. Most recently, members have helped refurbish houses for the poor and support a refugee family from the Congo.

The oldest parts of our building, the sanctuary and fellowship hall, were dedicated in 1923 and need renovation. The passage of time and the development of the city and the university have transformed the area and restricted vehicular traffic in front of the church, limiting both visibility and access.

For these reasons, the church in 1997 decided to relocate. This goal was diligently pursued but it proved extraordinarily difficult to implement. Because of the difficulties encountered and the implications of relocating during a pastoral transition, members voted to defer relocation efforts until a new pastor was installed.

Now, a consortium of religious organizations, including this church, hopes to provide parking in a large garage one block away. This leads the congregation to a multiple crossroads: a change in pastoral leadership, reconsideration of the decision to relocate, and devising creative partnerships with neighboring churches for more effective participation in mission and broader opportunities for youth.

This is, then, a church in transition, facing important choices, but doing so in the faith that issues can be resolved and the church can continue as a congregation dedicated to glorifying God and serving its community.

The pastor this church seeks must be dedicated to these purposes and able to help us steer a true course through a time of change and challenge.





## OUR SETTING

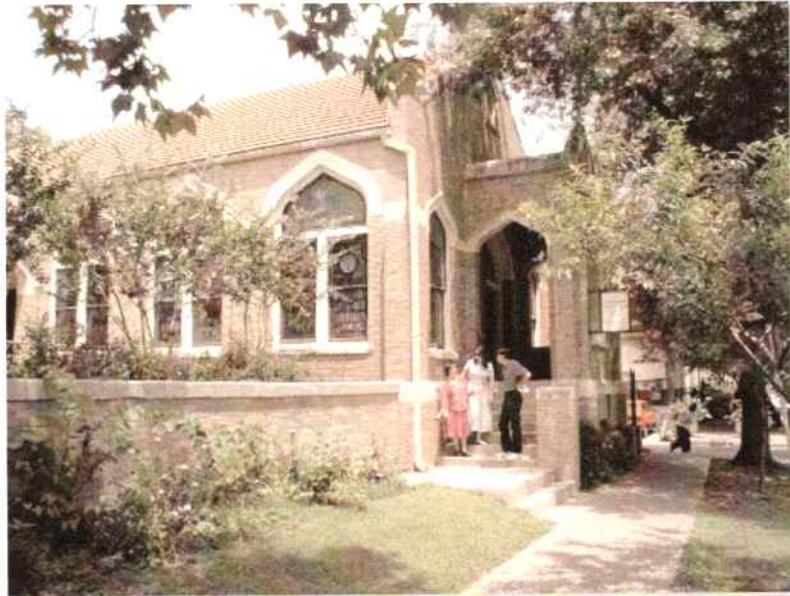
The Congregational Church is a small urban church located at the corner of 23rd and San Antonio Streets, one short block west of the University of Texas and Guadalupe Street, the north-south thoroughfare that borders the campus.

On the property are the sanctuary and fellowship hall, a patio and small garden, and a contemporary three-story educational wing. The sanctuary seats 120 persons and is noteworthy for its stained glass windows and the sense of intimacy it engenders. A piano/violin/cello trio distinguishes the music of this church. The trio and choir offer music ranging from classical to traditional and modern. Vocal and instrumental soloists often enhance morning worship, and the choir director frequently introduces new hymns to the congregation.

The church has four parking places adjacent to the educational wing, plus the free use after business hours of a commercial lot behind the buildings.

Neighbors on San Antonio Street include several other churches, a Hillel House student center, a highrise apartment building and a sorority house. The church shares 23rd Street with the Renaissance Market, a city-sponsored street market for arts and crafts. This block is closed to vehicles except for two hours each Sunday. Consequently, most of the time the primary automobile access to the church is the one-way San Antonio Street.

On Guadalupe Street and in the surrounding area are bookstores, restaurants, and shops catering to the university community. Parking in this area is limited, but church members are in conversation with other religious groups about building a highrise garage.



## OUR HISTORY

On March 6, 1901, the Reverend J. Ritchie Briggs and 56 members of the Tenth Street Methodist Church separated from that church and signed articles of incorporation establishing the Methodist Church of Austin. (These latter-day separatists were considered "liberal," and Reverend Briggs, who had been pastor of the Tenth Street Church for two years, had gone so far as to declare that he did not believe in Hell.)

Dr. Briggs preached the first sermon for the new church on Easter Sunday in the Odd Fellows Hall in downtown Austin. Seeking building funds, the congregation found them, but not from the Methodists. They were forthcoming from the Congregational Church, so the congregation examined their consciences and affirmed that they were Congregationalists. They affiliated with the Congregational Conference of Texas, changed the name of their church to First Congregational Church in 1904, and proceeded with plans to build a sanctuary downtown at Ninth and Colorado streets. It was completed in 1906. Many of the stained glass windows in the present church are a legacy from that first building.

Members decided in 1921 to move to the present site near the university because many students and faculty members had joined. The building was dedicated in 1923.

The church had always been open to all, regardless of color or ethnic background. In the early 1920s, after World War I, families with German surnames left their churches because of discrimination and worshipped in homes. They were invited to join this church, and several families did, including that of Architect Hugo F. Kuehne, who designed the new building. (The wing added in the 1960s was designed by another architect-member, Richard Swallow.)

Activities during the next decades centered around the university. Friday night dances (well chaperoned but still criticized) and stage productions attracted students. A discussion group examined books on social and political issues, and the minister continued weekly student ministry with a group called the Fellowship Club.

Emphasizing its focus, the name of the church was changed to University Community Church. Discussions and debates brought social concerns to the attention of Austinites: civil rights, use of natural resources, taxation, amendments to the Texas Constitution, and how to stay out of the war developing in Europe. Cooperative projects with other denominations sought to raise the nutritional level of Austinites, to provide needed medical care, and to improve public education.

In 1950, Reverend A. B. Miller, a graduate of Yale Divinity School, became pastor. He and his family were the first occupants of a new parsonage. Reverend Miller taught at Huston-Tillotson College, which was formed by the merger of two older institutions, one founded by Congregationalists and the other by Methodists soon after the Civil War to educate former slaves. Miller also was executive secretary to the Austin Council of Churches.

In 1951, the church changed its name again, to The Congregational Church of Austin. This coincided with the departure of several members to form a Unitarian church. A member of the Congregational Church left a legacy that financed the Unitarians' present building.

In 1957, Reverend Dr. Das Kelly Barnett, who taught at The Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, supplied the pulpit as an interim. He suggested that the pastoral search committee



look at one of his Yale Divinity School classmates, Reverend John Towery. The committee liked what they saw, as did the congregation — for 30 years. Reverend Towery arrived in 1959, and retired in 1989. He is now Pastor Emeritus.

Those 30 years saw the continuation of work with students (the church was always open as a place for quiet study), and the initiation of new programs, such as “talk back” sessions where members or guests explained their stand on a topic and responded to questions and comments. African-American membership grew to about 11 percent during the 1960s, primarily students and faculty of several institutions.

Responding to the youthful rebellion of the 1960s, the church opened The Raft for run-away youngsters, who were given counseling by graduate psychology students and a safe place to sleep in the church basement. With strict rules concerning parental notification and banning drugs and alcohol, The Raft filled a need when Austin was an attractive destination for runaways but had no means to help them.

Then for 20 years the basement housed a clinic that provided free medical care to the indigent and working poor. The People’s Free Clinic, originally staffed by volunteer professionals, evolved into the People’s Community Clinic. Members of the church served on the clinic’s board and volunteered medical services. With foundation and government grants and a need-based fee structure, the clinic still provides medical treatment and counseling to all who seek help.

Project Phase, which offered hot meals to teenage “street people” who were too young to be served by other agencies, next used the basement. Church members helped distribute meals and provided medical screening and clothing.

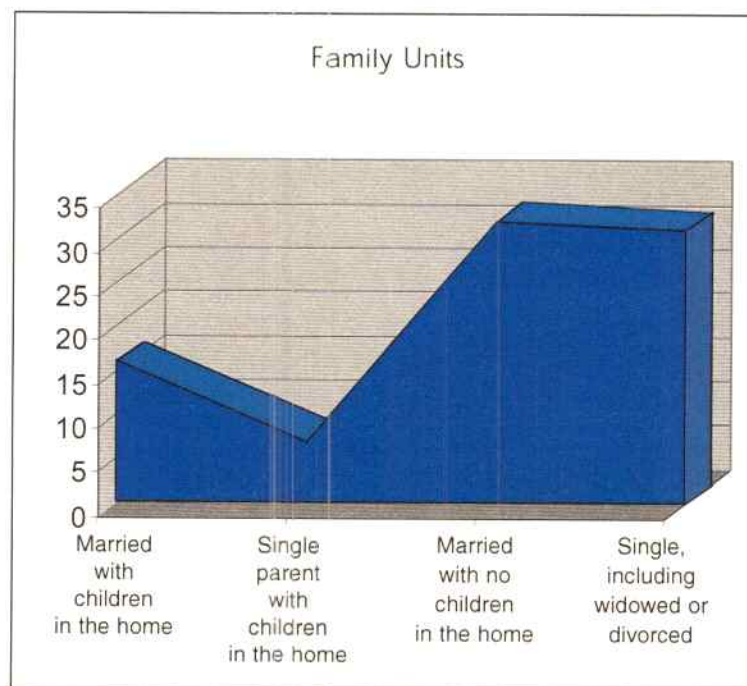
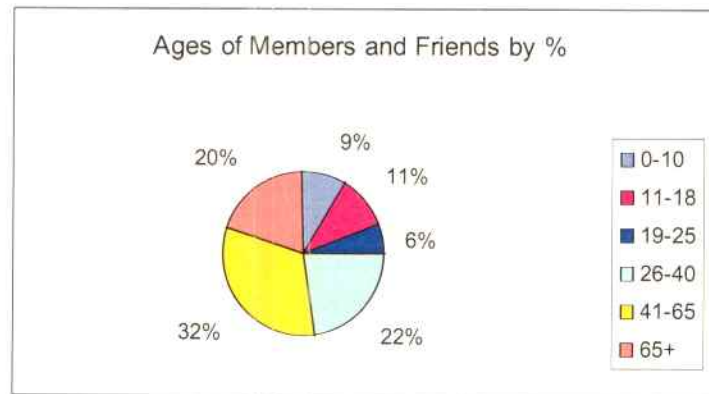
Reverend Yoshikuni Kaneda and his wife, Setsuko, arrived in January 1990. Yoshi brought a message of patience and readiness for new challenges. During his 11-year ministry, Yoshi Kaneda has stressed the importance of inclusiveness and has led the congregation into new fields. He organized the Okinawa Partnership, which includes visits and programs between Okinawan church leaders and those of the Brazos Association of the South Central Conference. This partnership has brought to the attention of local citizens and government representatives the problems caused by United States defense bases in Okinawa.

Students at Austin Presbyterian Seminary participate regularly in the life of this church, and one, a recent graduate now serving as associate minister of the UCC Church on the Green in New Haven, Connecticut, returned and delivered a sermon in May 2000. Others who were members before or during their seminary days lead parishes across the country. Two serve in the South Central Conference.

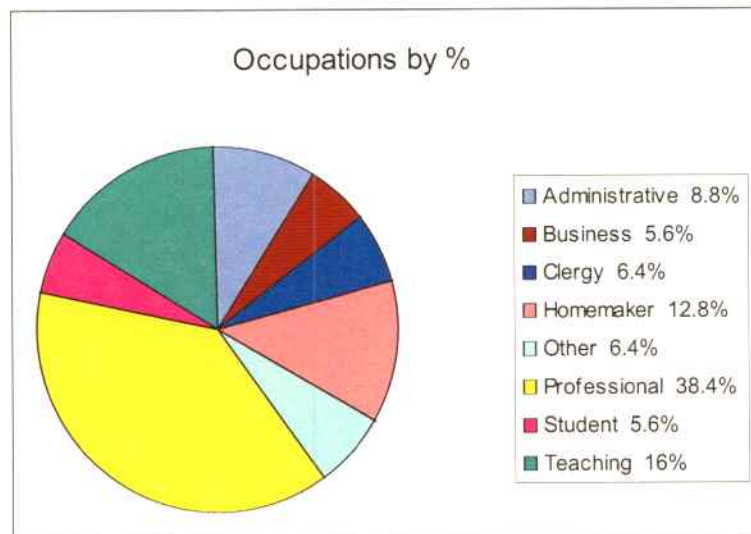
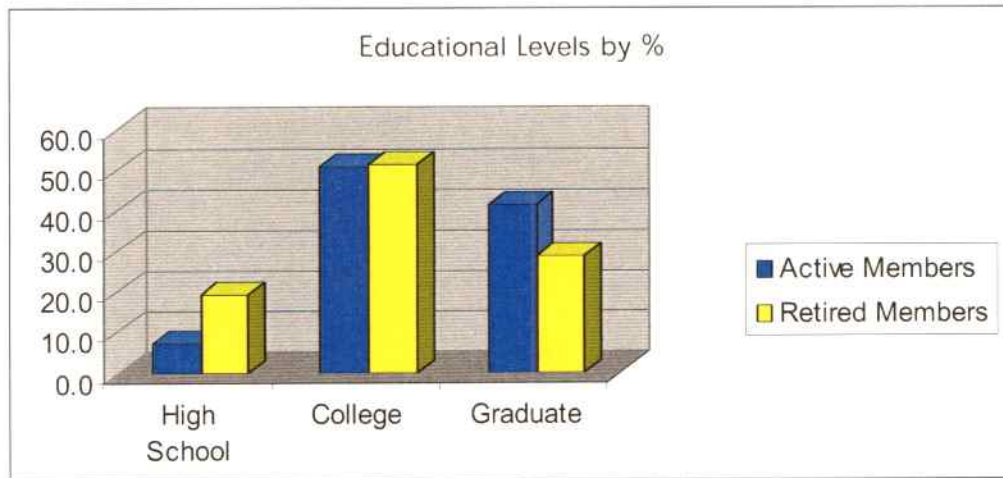
Something about this church, which encourages independent thought and discussion of ideas while respecting others’ beliefs, seems to lead many of its young members to consider occupations stressing learning and service to others. While a number have gone into the ministry from this congregation, others have chosen to serve in the healing and teaching professions.

As this church enters its second century, new options bring new challenges. Will the church relocate? Will it reach out in more cooperative ventures with its neighbors? Will it find ways to attract members from the multitudes moving to Austin in these boom times? A new pastor can help answer these questions.

## OUR PRESENT: WHO WE ARE







## MINISTRY TO EACH OTHER AND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Members contribute to worship services by teaching in the church school, reading the Bible lessons, giving the children's sermon, singing in the choir and providing special music, greeting visitors, and hosting the fellowship hour after Sunday morning services. Christian education, in keeping with our Vision and our Covenant, is of high importance. Before the morning service, the church school offers an adult class, one for high school students, middle schoolers, and first through fifth graders.

As part of their Christian witness, members volunteer in community projects, including the local food bank, programs to teach English to immigrants, Habitat for Humanity, and Austin Metropolitan Ministries. Several members participate in social justice projects through Austin Interfaith.



The church also participates in a community program to provide warm sleeping space to the homeless on cold winter nights. Until recently, a Korean Presbyterian church held Sunday afternoon services in the sanctuary.

The number of student members has fallen in recent decades. However, a small but dedicated number are always on hand, coming to worship and serving on church boards, leading CROP walks, and

organizing Hands on Housing projects. The congregation hopes to provide a church home for them during their student days that will encourage their ongoing spiritual growth and provide them opportunities to serve.



## GETTING TOGETHER, LIVING TOGETHER

The members of the Congregational Church of Austin enjoy each other's company, and Sunday activities offer opportunities for them to get together. After Sunday worship services, the congregation gathers for a fellowship hour. This is also a time to make announcements, recognize and celebrate individual members, and introduce and welcome new members.

About once a month, everyone, including visitors, is invited to a potluck dinner after the Sunday service. A Men's Book Club and a Women's Book Club both meet monthly in members' homes, and the Jugglers Group gets together monthly to discuss the joys and problems of modern family life.

At less frequent intervals, work days are scheduled to tackle maintenance chores. These also provide an opportunity for fellowship and teaching youngsters lifetime skills, such as house painting. Evening events like the Lenten supper-study meetings and the popular Pumpkin Carving Night before Halloween are devised to appeal to the entire church family, from toddlers to seniors.



Sometimes getting together simply means visiting sick members, helping a family move, providing emergency child care, and giving rides to youngsters or to older members who do not drive after dark.

The church has undertaken joint services with the University Baptist Church, Central Christian, and University Presbyterian. These have usually been on special occasions, like Maundy Thursday, and when visitors, like those representing the Okinawa church, were present.



During the past year, the church school held sessions with the University Baptist for elementary age children, and an evening family Summer Bible School met nightly for a week in June with the Presbyterians. During Lent, a study group met weekly during the day, and an evening group met for supper and study. Last year, a Bible study program, "The Divine Drama," was offered twice weekly. Lenten programs culminate in the yearly Easter Sunrise Service which the congregation celebrates on

top of Mount Bonnell, overlooking Lake Austin. This service has become increasingly popular; in 2000 it was attended by 350 people.

Most popular with members is the Christmas Candlelight Service, which traditionally is followed by a reception at the home of a member family.

Twice yearly, members retreat to Slumber Falls, a camp 50 miles south owned by the South Central Conference. Retreat weekends give opportunities for spiritual renewal and discussion of matters vital to the congregation as well as time to commune with nature in a lovely setting on the banks of the Guadalupe River.



## MINISTRY TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY

This congregation reaches out to the wider church and the world it serves both corporately and through the direct involvement of individual members in a host of UCC-related groups and activities.

One indication of any group's values and priorities is how it allocates its resources, and — in a church — which causes or occasions draw the strongest financial support. In this regard, this congregation's support of Our Church's Wider Mission tells its own story: In the last seven years, OCWM giving has averaged \$9,140 annually, approximately 7.2 percent of all members' giving. On a per member basis, this has been the largest OCWM commitment in the South Central Conference every year except one for many years.



During the last year the congregation's commitment to wider service has also been reflected in its financial support of New Church Development, One Great Hour of Sharing, the Heifer Project, and the Just Peace Appeal, which totaled more than \$4,600, some 3.6 percent of the church's total giving.

The church extends financial support as well to a number of UCC-related organizations and instrumentalities, including Eden Home (a nonprofit nursing home and retirement center in New Braunfels),

Slumber Falls Camp, Back Bay Mission of Biloxi, MS, and Huston-Tillotson College in Austin. But what has really benefited these and other UCC-related institutions has been the personal involvement of many members. Some have made significant financial gifts to those institutions, but others have given even more of themselves, their time and energy, serving on boards, chairing committees, and participating in the mission of these and similar UCC organizations as officers and lay leaders.

One member, for example, chairs Back Bay Mission's capital fund campaign in the South Central Conference. Another is vice president of that mission's board of directors and chaired the committee searching for a new executive director. Two members are trustees of Huston-Tillotson College, and one has just completed the second of two terms on the board of Eden Seminary in St. Louis. Another recently completed a term on the South Central Conference Board of Directors, and a member is its treasurer. Yet another is the incoming president of Eden Heights, a nonprofit retirement residence affiliated with Eden Home. Others have served on the boards of various instrumentalities of the national church, and the vice president of Texas Impact, the social action arm of the Texas Conference of Churches, is a church member. In September 1999, at the suggestion of the Board of Deacons and Austin Metropolitan Ministries (AMM), the congregation voted to sponsor the resettlement in Austin of a refugee family from abroad. It immediately raised more than \$3600 and set up a committee to organize aid to a French-speaking family of six from the Congo.



The congregation welcomed the Bukasa-Karasi family in February 2000, and with the aid of AMM and the Shepherd of the Hills Christian Church the family was settled into a fully furnished, three-bedroom apartment in Austin. The father and 19-year-old son quickly found jobs, the younger children began school, and the whole family started English as a Second Language study.

Four months into the program, the family is doing well and is ready to become financially responsible for their living expenses. Church members continue to help however needed, with transportation, translating, child care, and supplementary English lessons, as well as a monthly allowance to augment earnings.

The volunteers who serve as described here are no different from the rest of the members of this church; they just happen to be serving at this time. Others have participated in the past, and still others will surely step up in the future. Serving the wider church and extending its ministry are important, both to the congregation and to individual members.

This is a small church in a region where the UCC does not have a large presence. But individually and as a faith community, the Congregational Church of Austin can — and wants to be — in ministry to the world beyond its immediate neighborhood.



## HOW WE CONDUCT OUR CHURCH'S AFFAIRS

This church is run in a congregational manner. Committees and boards make recommendations to the membership, but are careful to leave the power of ultimate decision making to the congregation. The church organization allows laity to handle many problems and concerns so that they do not fall on the shoulders of the pastor.

Standing Groups and Committees				
Name	Purpose of Group	Number of Members	Frequency of Meetings	Leadership Role**
Coordinating Council*	Policy making, high-level decision making	7	Monthly	1
Board of Deacons*	Spiritual life, communion stewards	7	Monthly	1
Board of Trustees*	Supervise finances, general administration	9	Monthly	1
Board of Christian Education*	Sunday school & other educational programs	8	Monthly	2
Enlistment & Stewardship Committee*	Fund raising (pledge campaign)	3	As needed	2
Budget Committee	Budget development	7	Annually (Fall)	1
Nominating Committee*	Nominate officers	3	Annually	2
Building & Grounds Committee	Upkeep of facilities	5-10	As needed	2
Music Committee*	Oversee music program	3	As needed	2
Austin Interfaith	Community service	4	As needed	2
Fun & Fellowship	Celebrations and socializing	4-7	As needed	2
Publicity Committee	Advertising	3	As needed	2
<p>* Required by Church Constitution and/or Bylaws</p> <p>**</p> <p>1 Pastor and laity share responsibility</p> <p>2 Laity take primary initiative and responsibility</p>				



Employees and Officers		
Title	Function	Status
Pastor	Spiritual leader, counselor, preacher	Employee
Parish Educator/Outreach Coordinator*	Develop and deliver educational, promotional and service programs	Employee (Funded by grant through Sept. 2002)
Custodian (part time)	Janitorial services	Employee
Music Director (part time)	Choir director and special music programs	Employee
Secretary (1/2 time)	Administrative support	Employee
Musicians (part time)	Pianist, cellist, violinist perform during worship services and on special occasions.	Employees
Nursery Attendant	Child care during worship service and fellowship hour	Hourly employee.
Moderator	Leader at congregational meetings, Chair of the Coordinating Council	Elected (one year term)
Financial Secretary	Collection of incoming funds from a variety of sources (loose plate, pledges, special offerings, rental income, etc.)	Elected (one year term)
Treasurer	Disbursement of funds, Chair of the Budget Committee	Elected (one year term)
Clerk	Scribe and record keeper	Elected (three year term)
Church School Superintendent	Christian Education coordination	Elected (one year term)
Historian	Archivist	Elected (one year term)
Austin Metropolitan Ministry	Representative to city-wide cooperative.	Elected (one year term)
Brazos Association Representative		Elected (one year term)
Delegate to South Central Conference		Elected (one year term)
University Area Partners	Representative to neighborhood association	Elected (one year term)
*This position is vacant.		

## Financial Summary

### Income

<b>Year</b>	<b>OCWM</b>	<b>Other Designated Giving</b>	<b>Local Church Support</b>	<b>Other*</b>	<b>Total</b>
1995	\$9,099.50	\$11,903.43	\$99,998.86	\$5,866.00	\$126,867.79
1996	\$10,036.20	\$13,462.68	\$95,236.15	\$21,889.42	\$140,624.45
1997	\$8,856.00	\$8,020.00	\$102,831.09	\$44,504.97	\$164,212.06
1998	\$8,665.50	\$9,340.85	\$101,356.17	\$32,177.12	\$151,539.64
1999	\$10,131.15	\$9,006.75	\$107,704.42	\$89,885.06	\$216,727.38

\* Includes: rental income, refunds, interest, grant for Youth Minister (1996-1999), relocation funds (1997-1999), grant for Parish Educator/Outreach Coordinator (1999), refugee family assistance (1999).

### Expenditures

<b>Year</b>	<b>Employees*</b>	<b>Operating</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Total</b>
1995	\$69,543.84	\$29,834.70	\$25,893.09	\$125,271.63
1996	\$72,030.38	\$33,451.69	\$24,095.60	\$129,577.67
1997	\$84,201.25	\$39,708.38	\$28,140.17	\$152,049.80
1998	\$88,276.05	\$33,665.44	\$25,904.98	\$147,846.47
1999	\$96,297.66	\$38,289.50	\$26,812.44	\$161,399.60

\* Includes: Pastor, Secretary, Custodian, Youth Minister (1996-1999), Choir Director (1995), Parish Educator/Outreach Coordinator (1999).



## OUR FUTURE AND OUR OPTIONS

For 77 years, the Congregational Church has stood on one-fifth of an acre a block west of the University of Texas campus, where byproducts of that institution have increasingly crowded in — shops, highrise apartment buildings, an outdoor crafts market, street people. Changes in the neighborhood and local culture challenge members to consider how the church should respond and, perhaps, change.

### RELOCATION

The lack of room for expansion, plus the need for extensive and costly repairs, led the congregation after much study to vote in May 1997 to relocate. Following this vote, four relocation committees were established to develop our vision statement, look into selling our property, raise capital funds, and select a site and develop a building program.

Sites and construction proved inordinately expensive; buyers looked at the current property but made no reasonable offers. Thus in October 1999, when church members realized that new challenges loomed — selecting a pastor to replace the retiring Reverend Kaneda, and making plans to celebrate the church's centennial in 2001 — the congregation voted to defer further action, with the exception of establishing a relocation fund, until after those challenges had been met.

### PARTNERING

In January 2000, the church established the Dialogue Committee with the task of entering into dialogue with other churches about joint activities and partnerships. The discussions could lead this church and another to share premises, share programs, or even merge.

While the report of this committee is not due until later in the year, several joint projects are being carried out. Christian education programs meld church schools for youngsters at the Congregational Church and the University Baptist Church. Joint worship with the Baptists, University Presbyterian, and Central Christian brought neighbors together on special occasions.

A novel way of partnering was recently proposed that might solve parking problems for a number of neighboring religious institutions. The church is considering joining with several other religious groups in the neighborhood in a project led by the University Baptist Church to build a highrise garage. The garage would be used by the university during business hours and available for those attending religious events during evenings and weekends.

### STAYING IN THE SAME LOCATION

With the possibility that there might soon be adequate parking, the idea of remaining in place and seeking ways to make needed repairs and improvements has revived. It has appeal to those who wish to continue the 77-year tradition of worshipping in this central location, and also to those who prefer investing their money and time in helping others. Still, remaining in place would involve extensive — and expensive — work to meet city building codes and to bring back into service space not currently suitable for use.

Once a new pastor has been installed, the relocation question will be addressed in the light of current conditions. Whatever the congregation decides to do will offer opportunities to carry out the mission implied in the vision statement and the church covenant.

## OUR NEW PASTOR

Every congregation has an impressive task when struggling to conceptualize a new pastor. There is no way to list all the attributes members seek, but in response to a UCC questionnaire, members of this church made, among many comments, the following:

*"I would like a minister who is approachable and easy to talk to, who is kind and warm. Someone who is a dynamic speaker yet has a good sense of humor."*

*"I would like a minister who reaches out to all age groups; also, someone whose devotion to God and to the church is evident."*

*"Trustworthy, intuitive, perceptive, inspiring. Shares values of the congregation. A sense of humor, a good story teller. Has charisma."*

*"A person of joyful, passionate faith."*

*"I would like a pastor who is dedicated to children's religious education."*

Fifty-nine church members took the time to fill out the UCC questionnaire, "Our church needs a minister who . . . ," with their top 12 choices among the 43 listed attributes. And after making their choices, many voiced their wishes at a retreat where an afternoon session focused on selection of a new pastor.

Some of the comments at the retreat echoed those above, while others brought up new topics. "I would like a pastor who will help us attract new members," for example. And, "We need a leader who is not afraid of challenges, because we have tough decisions to make."

Other traits the pastoral search committee were instructed to search for include "sees music as an integral part of the worship experience," "technologically literate," "primary focus on helping people with their spirituality — a spiritual leader," "someone who generates ideas, who offers suggestions, and who helps us in implementation of goals." In summary, the members want "a pastor who is good with people," and "a leader who encourages others and helps develop leadership skills."

They affirmed the attributes selected from the questionnaire, as listed below:

Our church needs a minister who . . . . .

Is an effective preacher/speaker

Is a compassionate and caring person, sensitive to others' needs

Is accepting of people with divergent backgrounds

Is a helpful counselor

Builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works

Is mature and emotionally secure.

Is effective in planning and leading worship

Makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those  
confined to their homes

Is effective with committees and officers

Is a good leader

Is a person of faith

Encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives.



## AUSTIN AS A PLACE TO LIVE

Austin is a beautiful city stretching from gently rolling farmland in the east to the ruggedly beautiful Hill Country to the west.

Winters are mild and short; spring comes in March with a bursting of bluebonnets along the highways and fruit-tree blossoms in the parks. Summer comes early and stays long; fortunately, everything is air-conditioned. Unfortunately, the long growing season leads to year-round allergies. Antihistamines help.

Austin's population totals 600,000 and is growing. The city is in the center of the state, 75 miles north of San Antonio and 200 miles south of Dallas and Fort Worth, all on the Interstate 35 corridor that runs from the Canadian border to Mexico. Austin has a new airport and is served by nine airlines. The Amtrak Texas Eagle, a Chicago to Los Angeles train, stops here.

The lower Colorado River, which was dammed to create the nearby Highland Lakes, flows through downtown Austin as Town Lake. Long before the first Europeans set foot in Texas, the banks of the Colorado were popular camping grounds for Native Americans. The tree-lined shores of Town Lake now offer hike and bike trails and other park lands.

Austin has been considered a rather laid-back city, despite being the state capital and home to the 40,000+ students of the University of Texas and to thousands more at eight other colleges, universities, and seminaries. But recently, Austin has emerged as a high-tech boom town dubbed "Silicon Hills." Dell Computer and many dot.com companies started in Austin, and Samsung, Motorola, IBM, Sematech, and other major corporations have a large presence here.

The natural beauty of the area, the casual lifestyle, and the resources of local colleges and universities attract writers and artists in both the visual and performing arts. Austin bills itself as "The Live Music Capital of the World," and boasts 120 live music venues for a variety of tastes.

The movie and television industries have discovered Austin and, as these continue to converge with the Internet, Austin will play a growing role in the multimedia business.

Over the next decade, the downtown area will be reshaped by the development of a campus for a technology company headquarters as well as a new city hall, performing arts complex, and museums.

## PERFORMING ARTS

Austin is one of only 14 U.S. cities that has its own ballet, symphony, and opera companies. Many fine arts organizations offer premier entertainment throughout the year, in settings ranging from the U.T. Bass Concert Hall and the 80-year-old Paramount Theater to the outdoor Hillside Theater in Zilker Park and intimate independent spaces for experimental and traditional productions.

The U.T. Performing Arts Center attracts touring companies and star performers to the large concert facility, while an opera theater and several recital halls, including one with a majestic tracker organ, feature performances by future stars receiving training at the university's highly touted drama and music schools.

## MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, AND GARDENS

Austin hosts a number of historical museums, including the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum, state history museums, the Austin Children's Museum, Pioneer Farm, and George Washington Carver Museum.

The arts are represented by 35 galleries and museums, including the Elisabet Ney Sculpture Studio, the Umlauf Sculpture Garden, the Mexic-Arte Museum, and the Austin Museum of Art. U.T.'s Blanton Art Museum has one of the world's largest collections of Latin American Art. The University also displays the James and Mari Michener Collection of modern art.

The Botanical Gardens at Zilker Park provide a variety of programs and exhibits in central Austin, while a few miles south the unique Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center welcomes visitors to view native plants and attend special events.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

Rolling hills, a chain of lakes 150 miles long, 300 days of sunshine, hike and bike trails, swimming holes, 14,300 acres of parks, professional and college athletics, 28 golf courses, and community team sports for all ages offer Austinites opportunities for exercise and relaxation. Barton Springs, a 1,000-foot-long spring-fed pool with a year-round water temperature of 68 degrees, is in the 360-acre Zilker Park, which also has playing fields, gardens, picnicking areas, and an outdoor theater.

A few miles farther south, but still in the city limits, is the 640-acre McKinney Falls State Park. West of the city, more than 7,500 public acres in the hills invite hikers to take an early morning bird walk or view the night sky, and parks and boat ramps dot the shores of the Highland Lakes, most within an hour's drive.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Congregational Church of Austin  
512/472-2370; Fax: 472-2370 \*51  
<http://congregational.faithweb.com/>

<http://austintexas.org>

<http://austin-chamber.org/>

<http://www.texasoutside.com/highland/htm>  
(outdoor recreation)

South Central Conference, UCC  
512/459-7607; <http://www.southcc.com>

<http://www.klru.org> (public television)

<http://www.kut.org> (public radio)

Austin Independent School District  
512/414-1700; [www.austin.isd.tenet.edu](http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu)



## NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Pastoral Search Committee of the Congregational Church of Austin (UCC) affirms its moral and legal commitment to support and implement a program of equal employment opportunity, and does not discriminate against any employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, or creed.\*

\*Candidates for the position of pastor must be eligible for standing in the Brazos Association of the South Central Conference of the UCC.

## HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be sent to:

The Reverend Mark H. Miller  
Conference Minister  
South Central Conference, UCC  
6633 Highway 290 East, Suite 200  
Austin, Texas 78723-1157

512/459-7607; FAX 512/451-2904  
<http://www.southcc.com>

E-mail: Rev. Miller: [markhmiller@worldnet.att.net](mailto:markhmiller@worldnet.att.net)  
Office: [scenconf@flash.net](mailto:scenconf@flash.net)

## QUESTIONS?

Call Dennis Murphy, Chair, Congregational Church Pastoral Search Committee:  
512/255-6006 (office), 255-4602 (home) E-mail: [dmurphy@austin.rr.com](mailto:dmurphy@austin.rr.com)







A photograph of the exterior of The Congregational Church of Austin, showing a modern building with large windows and trees in the foreground.

## The Congregational Church of Austin

408 West Twenty-Third Street

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