

THE VISITOR

July/August 2020

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt



In Matthew's gospel, Herod lusts after his brother's wife and takes her to be his wife, which violates Jewish Law. John the Baptist condemns Herod, so Herod arrests John and throws him in prison. Shortly thereafter, during his birthday party, Herod orders his guards to kill John and bring him his head—a scene that exposes the full corruption, moral sickness, and depravity of Herod, his family, his cronies, and his manner of rule.

When Jesus hears that Herod has killed John, he withdraws to a deserted place by himself. And when the crowds hear it, they follow Jesus. Matthew says five thousand men, plus women and children, drop what they're doing and leave.

Matthew paints an incredible scene—thousands of people leaving their towns and villages at the same time, quickly evacuating Herod's kingdom in a mass exodus, all of them following Jesus to a deserted place. Imagine the huge dust clouds rising over the roads of Galilee.

Matthew's imagery, invoking the exodus from Egypt, is highly provocative. Herod is Pharaoh, and Jesus is Moses. Just as the people followed Moses in an exodus from Pharaoh's kingdom, the people follow Jesus in an exodus from Herod's kingdom. That's how corrupt, morally sick, and depraved Herod, his family, his cronies, and his manner of rule are—as bad as

the slave state of Egypt. So bad it requires a new mass exodus, a complete withdrawal of all support, total repudiation.

What does Jesus do when these thousands of people show up in the deserted place after their exodus from Herod's kingdom? He has compassion on them and heals them. In Herod's kingdom, people are sick. Herod has no compassion for them—let them be sick, it's what it is. But Jesus has boundless compassion for them—he heals them of the pervasive sickness of Herod's kingdom.

Then, seeing the crowd's hunger, the disciples want to send the people back from where they came, back into Herod's kingdom to scrounge around for food on their own. But Jesus says no, they'll stay here with me in this deserted place outside of Herod's kingdom, and everyone will eat together until they hunger no more.

Matthew provides a stark contrast between Herod's kingdom of corruption and depravity, where the tyrant murders the righteous, and people suffer sickness and scrounge for food, and God's kingdom of boundless compassion, where people are physically well and well-fed. Jesus leads people on the exodus from Herod's kingdom to a place untainted by Herod's corruption, sickness, and depravity, and in that fresh and open space gives them a taste of God's kingdom.

But the drama doesn't end with the mass withdrawal from Herod's kingdom. Jesus returns to the towns and villages of Galilee, to Herod's kingdom, and so do the crowds. Hopefully, people return transformed by what they experienced in the deserted place. Some may quickly fall back into the old sick patterns

of life in Herod's kingdom. But others will be more deeply transformed, radically changed for life, because of what they experienced in the deserted place with Jesus and the others out there with them. And radically transformed, they will become agents of Christ-like resistance and transformation within Herod's kingdom, pressing for change from within the belly of the beast.

This ancient story about withdrawing to be transformed, and returning to be transformers, is instructive for us today. May we find ways to withdraw with Christ, and may we return with Christ as agents of transformation.

TOM

September Visitor Deadline August 24, 2020

Church Leadership

Deacons Chair	Faye Dierksen
Outreach Team	Whit Bodman
Moderator	Joy Penticuff
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Dennis Murphy
Christian Education Coordinators	Jaime Hadley
Youth Sunday School	Amy Kent Rivera
Clerk	Reuel Nash
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmaster	Mel Oakes
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

Heart of Texas Association News

July

by Liz Nash

As many of you know, our Association sets aside money in our scholarship fund each year to award as scholarships to our seminary students. Also, we are able to award some of the **Greg Felder** Memorial Scholarship money in this effort. The current awards are going to **Betty McDaniel** at Chicago Theological Seminary; **Rene Slataper** at Lexington Theological Seminary who is transferring to Chicago Theological Seminary beginning this fall; and Brooke Dooley at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth on the TCU campus. All are earning their Master of Divinity degree and are Members in Discernment in the Heart of Texas Association. Both **Betty** and **Rene** are in the online programs at their schools, programs that allow them to work in their home cities and area churches while pursuing seminary degrees. The students apply for these scholarships through our Association scholarship committee. Our Association website, <http://hotaucc.org/>, has a page to congratulate them that also tells how to inquire about scholarship applications.

Our South Central Conference Annual Meeting was held online for the first time on Saturday morning, June 13th. While it was a loss not to gather face to face in a more extended time together in friendship and worship, the meeting was done in an excellent way that reflected the hard work of Board President **Nikki Stahl** and several others who helped put it together. There was uplifting music and outstanding worship in the recorded video offered by Houston Association churches; video reports including an opportunity to hear from our new Consulting Conference Minister **Campbell Lovett**; screen sharing that helped us with minutes, financial reports, understanding bylaw changes that were voted on and adopted, and the slate of nominations; a lovely tribute to Rev. **Dr. Alice Graham**, the outstanding Executive Director of Back Bay Mission who is retiring at the end of the year; a tribute of gratitude to **Jim**

Blume, our long-time SCC attorney who has given us so much over the years and has now retired: a well-crafted agenda that helped us move along in a timely way that also allowed for discussion; and a time for video break-out rooms that allowed small groups of us to gather and talk. As many of us are finding out, there are new opportunities to be creative and connect that many of us will very likely use in the future as we go back to worship in person. Many thanks to our Conference leadership for this meeting.

At the meeting, we elected new representatives for our Association, and we continue to have others serving on our behalf. We elected **Bainie Wild** from St. John's UCC, Burton, to the South Central Conference Board of Directors and Rev. **Jenny Russell** from Touchstone Community Church, Boerne, to the Nominating Committee. **Carl Brown** from Trinity Church of Austin continues to serve on the SCC Board of Directors; Rev. **Nikki Stahl** from United Christian, Austin, continues as President of the SCC Board; Rev. **Peter Bauer** from Faith UCC, New Braunfels, and **Andrew Roblyer** from Friends Congregational UCC, College Station continue as General Synod delegates; **Josh Mata** from United Christian, **Phillip Gullen** from Friends Congregational, and **Jerry Carpenter**, retired pastor of Weimar UCC, continue as General Synod alternate delegates; and **Cindy Miller** from St. John's UCC, Burton continues on the Nominating Committee. As the chair of the SCC Nominating Committee, I also thank Rev. **Trent Williams** and Rev. **Peter Bauer** for their SCC Board service as they finish their terms as representative and secretary.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Heart of Texas Association News
August
by Liz Nash

Jewel Johnson, our brother in Christ and Pastor Emeritus of St. Peter's Church of Coupland, died Thursday, July 2nd. He served St. Peter's for 17 years, starting in 1955 for four years and returning in 1968. In this Association, he also served as pastor of St. John's UCC in Burton, St. John's in Richland, and Trinity United Church of Niederwald. Beyond the Heart of Texas, **Jewel** pastored churches in Dallas, Illinois, and Nebraska. He and his wife, **Mary**, who passed away in 2016, lived a rich life of service and commitment. Jewel was a committed peace and justice activist, a beloved pastor, a joyous singer, and a devoted husband and father. He has given all of us a marvelous example of Christian ministry and faithfulness. We give thanks for **Jewel** and for the rich and full life he lived as we commend him to God's eternal love and life.

This month, we say farewell to our brother in Christ, **Ron Trimmer**, and his sons **Ben** and **Aaron**. **Ron** has accepted a call to Lake Ozark Christian Church in Lake Ozark, Missouri. He has served as the founding pastor of Hope United in Georgetown for the past 10 years and served at Friedens Church of Washington for several years before that. He and **Jan** married in Washington, and they moved together with the boys to Georgetown with the shared commitment to the work of starting Hope United. We are grateful, too, for all he has given to the wider church and community. He has been the chair of the Brazos Association Committee on Ministry, has served for a number of years as the chair of the South Central Conference New and Renewing Churches Committee, and has connected in many ways in the Georgetown community. **Ron** is a good friend to many of us. We send the **Trimmer** family off with love and prayers as they go to serve at Lake Ozark and to be closer to **Ron's** family in the St. Louis area.

Our prayers are with the churches in the Heart of Texas Association who are in transition at this most challenging time. These include Hope United, United Christian in Austin, Evangelical UCC in Lyons, and Weimar UCC. We have others that have had pastoral changes this spring since the pandemic began, including Bethany Congregational in San Antonio and Church of the Savior in Cedar Park. I know all of you are working to find the path God is calling you to follow, and we pray that the ministries of all of our churches will continue to be full and faithful.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Keep Up the Worship Feedback and Ideas

The Deacons would like to thank everyone who has contributed their input regarding our video worship service via Ccaworshipconcerns@gmail.com. To make this grand experiment work, we need to continue to improve the worship experience for everyone, and to do so we need to continue to hear from you. What is working for you? What is not? What are you missing? Below is a “distilled” summary of the input we have received so far. Our worship team (**Tom, Nodie, Rene** and Deacons) are looking at all this input and have already started to take action on several items.

Service

- The new format works great for providing a unified thematic experience
- The insertions announcing different parts of the service are a great touch - helpful for continuity. For visually impaired – could provide voiceovers for these transitions.
- Amy’s “children’s time” is great – appreciated by adults as much as kids. Good to see her part of the service.
- Could better use the physical sanctuary as an “anchor” for the service.
- Pastor is public face of the church – should handle the welcoming and dismissal.
- More time for the reflection.
- Having several members involved in service is great – keep that up, and send out invitation, whether as worship gift or other aspect of the service.
- Recruit more of the ordained members to participate.
- Start the Joys and Concerns Zoom gathering within 5-10 minutes of end of service – would better integrate the two experiences.

Music

- Find ways to make the music as important as it was when we were meeting together.
- Ask trio and **Nodie** and **Deacons** to brainstorm ways to improve the musical experience, more interactive.
- Make it possible for folks to send in musical “gifts” that someone else could record.
- Find a safe way to show a choral performance, if not ours then plug in someone else’s.
- Want to see musicians play during hymns; lyrics as subtitles, if we can manage that technologically. If not, perhaps send pdfs of hymns.

Technical Issues

- Appreciate rapid improvement in smoothness and polish of the service video. Keep it up.
- Sanctuary is echoey – need better mics than cell phones for working there.
- Provide more assistance for members with technical issues regarding recording and sending videos so that even the tech unsavvy can be involved.
- Poll members about their reaction to the service videos.

Personals by Pat Oakes

Our church has a long history of cellists in the music program, going back to **Lucille Mick** who served as the trio cellist for 20 years (1940-60). She filled in occasionally in the early '60s as folks still at the church remember her. **Marilyn Harris** was another of our cellists for several years during the 1980s and later toured with singer Neil Diamond for several years. Our current cellist, **Tony Rogers**, has really gone far afield while staying at home during the pandemic. He started the Covid Cello Project. He says, "The idea started when I was trying to find something for the Austin Cello Choir (which rehearses during normal times in our fellowship room at the church) to do during the start of the pandemic. I arranged a Toccata by **Bach** that had become at some point a theme for the group, something we have played numerous semesters and I invited the choir to submit individual videos of their parts. I had recorded this years ago for their practice, so they had individual backing tracks for each part already....and then I thought to open it up to the world. I made a single post on the "internet cello society" Facebook page and invited my email list of other cellists to partici-

pate. Seventeen cellists participated in the first video...and now we are up to 200! New members are coming online all the time, and the mailing list is now over 700 from over 45 countries. All being spread through word of mouth and social media from each of the members including me. I keep in touch with the members almost daily and it's so great to get feedback and words of praise from most of them about how much they enjoy this and it's giving cellists around the world a way to connect and a project to work on in their spare time. Some people want to know what I do to pull this off technically, and it's really a cumbersome meticulous effort that I really enjoy once I get started. I use three programs to pull it off....Compressor (to crop and shrink the files), Logic Pro (for the Audio), and Final Cut Pro (for the video). www.covidcelloproject.com directs you to my website landing page for the project, and you watch all the videos there or on YouTube searching 'Covid Cello Project.'" If you are so inclined, consider donating to the project—instructions are on the site and the proceeds are shared with all of the participants. So many musicians are out of work; this is an opportunity to help.



tonyrogerscello@gmail.com

Donate links:
venmo.com/TonyRogersCello
paypal.me/TonyRogersCello

Bonnie Greer - Prince George, BC Canada
Hanna Grymel-Babinecz - Stuttgart, Germany
Stephen Haig - Bath, UK
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Abbey Hansen - Cleveland Heights, OH, USA
Avram Harris - London, UK
Alison Head - Falmouth Cornwall
Christina Hernandez - Frederick, MD USA
Regina Herry - Austin, TX USA
Autumn Hiscock - Montreal, QC, Canada
Kimberly Hodes - Tucson AZ USA
Maria Hoyos - Sacramento, CA USA
Allison Hoyt - Council Bluffs, IA USA
Rebecca Hulme - Charlottetown, PE, Canada
Dede Hurson - Austin, Texas USA
Jennifer Hwo - Spicewood, TX USA
Pat Ingram - Austin, TX USA
Chris Jack - St Albans, England
Jennifer Jaromin - San Antonio, TX USA

7/20 Tony Rogers and the Covid Cello Project

Photos cont. on next page

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes



7/20 A clutch of cellos playing in the Covid Cello Project

When asked about their daughter Alex's situation for the fall (she teaches elementary school), Pastor **Tom VandeStadt** replied, "As you can imagine, **Robin** and I are very concerned. The latest news her school district has provided her is that the teachers will have to report to school to teach remotely from their school classrooms for the first five weeks of class. The district will monitor the situation and decide what to do after those first five weeks. **Robin** and I are going up to Dallas to visit her on Saturday, so if there's any change in the plan, I'm sure we will find out. **Robin** and I want to see her in person before she starts teaching because we realize we will most likely not get to see her again until there is a vaccine. **Robin** is still working from home, and putting in rather long hours on nights and weekends. As you can imagine, the Department of Health and Human Services is rather busy now."

Reuel Nash reports on their most recent adventure, "We left Austin Saturday, July 11, with our two dogs, Luka and Ladybird, and our cat **Emma**, all packed into our Explorer pulling our Lance trailer. Our plan was to stop only for gas at gas stations -- to not go inside -- and to use the restroom at Rest Areas, give the dogs some running time at dog parks wherever possible, cook breakfast and dinner in the trailer, and to eat sandwiches for lunch on the road. We met **Liz's** niece **Claire** in Waco to pick up a bag of baby clothes for **Vivi**. The first night we

made it to the North Little Rock KOA. When we got to Memphis we tried to go to the dog park along the Mississippi where we had stopped on the same trip last year, but it was closed because of COVID-19. At some point on the second day, I was driving and **Liz** was doing email on her phone, so I put on my classical playlist. The first song was William Tell Overture -- quite something to drive to. The second song was Finlandia -- the tune for my favorite hymn *This is My Song*. The second verse stood out driving in Tennessee: blue skies, clover leaf, and pine. The second night we stayed at the Soaring Eagle Campground near Knoxville, TN. The third night we stayed at the KOA near the Antietam Battlefield near Hagerstown, Maryland. That left us a slightly shorter fourth day to get to Mount Washington, Massachusetts, on July 14. **Annie** came down from Vermont that night, and we expected **Ellie**, **Louis**, and **Vivi** to arrive (from Montreal) during the day Wednesday. The Border Patrol didn't see it our way, and refused entry to Louis (a Canadian citizen) because his travel was "non-essential" even though it would have been fine had he been entering by air. (**Ellie** and **Vivi** did in fact arrive for a short visit later that week.) The weather has been wonderful. The dogs are in heaven. The cat is exploring the house. (Note—**Emma** is an inside cat, but managed to escape through a loose screen one evening—they found her under the house the next morning. She stayed very

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

close to her “parents” that whole next day.) We did get to see Comet Neowise last night. I saw it through the trees at first, and we moved to the other end of the porch to see it clearly. We brought a small telescope which meant that we were able to see it a bit more clearly.”



7/20/20 The wonderful view from the porch of their place in the Berkshires which the Nash family is enjoying very much

Andy and Faye Dierksen are on a long visit to South Dakota and Nebraska this summer to see some family and attempt to avoid the growing COVID numbers in Austin. They took a three day camping journey to arrive in South Dakota and are looking forward to being able to go to Nebraska once their 14 day quarantine is over. **Faye** is almost 30 weeks pregnant and she and **Baby Dierksen** are doing wonderfully! **Andy** and **Faye** are missing everyone from church and hope to return to Austin the second week of August but it will all really depend on the COVID numbers at that time. Do note that the picture with both **Andy** and **Faye** has an unusual background. “That gizmo is a stamp mill from the Homestake Gold Mine here in Lead, SD. A stamp mill is a type of mill machine that crushes material by pounding it rather than grinding it. It was used in the extraction of gold. Though we have a few gold mines still in operation here in Lead, the Homestake mine which that stamp mill came out of is now an underground science lab being used to study many things including dark matter!”



7/24/20 Faye Dierksen at almost 30 weeks with Baby Dierksen



7/20 Andy and Faye enjoying their time South Dakota

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

Bill Mueller had an unexpected adventure in mid-July. He told the nurse practitioner at Westminster (where they live) that he had a pain in his chest. She checked him and found nothing wrong. He got himself to the Emergency Room anyway. He had planned to take **Joan** but they said she would not be allowed to go in. He was already on his way. The ER doctor found nothing wrong and sent him home. They learned something important. If they had kept him at the hospital, he would be alone and **Joan** could not go see him. They are thinking carefully about any future hospital trips. Upon his return, they were quarantined for five days and **Bill** was tested for Covid 19. At the same time their daughter **Liz**, her husband and his sister flew to **Alaska** to visit family. They were tested twice and were quarantined their first week there. They planned to visit family for two weeks. **Joan** and **Bill** hope they will be allowed to come home. Their continuing pleasure is seeing their granddaughter **Charlotte** via FaceTime. She is now nine months old and delights in exploring this world. **Joan** reflects, "What a glorious and strange time this is."



7/23/20 Adorable 9 month old Charlotte Mueller

Jonathan Geer and **Roberto Hernandez**, proud and happy parents of their daughter **Xitlali**, report that she is doing great. She just turned six months old on July 13. She had her six month checkup two days later and is in great health and hitting all her milestones. Her totally impar-

tial parents report that she is still just the most happy, precious and curious little baby. She loves talking to the cats and makes some really interesting sounds now! Here are a few photos from the photo shoot they had recently at their home. She's wearing a new dress that **Jonathan** made for her!



7/20 Xitlali Hernandez-Geer at 6 months



7/20 Xitlali wearing the outfit that Jonathan made for her

Whit and **Betty Bodman's** son, **Noah**, and his wife, **Erin**, now have twin boys, born at 33 weeks. **Otis** was born first, coming in at 3 lbs. 10 oz. His brother, **Arlo**, was born two minutes later at 3 lbs. 5 oz. They are now both breathing without assistance and doing well, as are the parents. Since they were both born on 7-11, some suggested they be named **Big** and **Gulp**. That did not get widespread approval. They are benefiting from a wonderful new prenatal unit in Kalispell, Montana. **Betty** and **Whit** are strategizing ways to get up there while maintaining quarantine. Most likely they will arrive in late

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

September, having driven and camped on the way up. They expect to have camping instructions and training from **David** and **Sara Ross**, who have far more experience than they do in these matters. Their other grandchildren in Jersey City have, with their parents, survived the virus. Parents, **Greg** and **Elizabeth** and older sister **Clara** tested positive for antibodies and youngest **Elsie** did not, which is a mystery. **Whit** and **Betty** have not yet figured out how to plan a trip to New Jersey.



7/21/20 Whit and Betty's daughter-in-law Erin with twins Otis (the biggest) on the left and Arlo on the right



7/18/20 Bigger brother Otis has some dad time



7/18/20 Tiny Arlo Bodman making his photo debut in the Visitor

Don Miles' daughter **Juliette** will start as a professor at William Woods University in Fulton, Missouri, in the Equine Studies Department this fall. She has a degree in Equine Administration from WWU, and will also be working with their Admissions Department. **Don** is delighted to report that **Juliette** texted him when she landed in Maine—home from eight months in Kuwait where she was deployed with the Missouri National Guard while finishing her Ph.D. online in International Commerce. She'll be in quarantine for two weeks at Ft. Hood before heading to Woods University for the fall semester. WWU was one of the first in the country to offer a degree in Equestrian Administration. She'll be teaching that, but also some business courses since her Ph.D. is in International Commerce. She'll also be tasked with helping the admissions office get their story straight. Some of the personnel there had been talking about rodeos and how to become a farrier, neither of which the university offers. They're more into breeding, plus horses in law enforcement and the racing industry. She has two "foster" horses and a horse of her own, and has done some consulting work in that field. Given that she usually teaches undergraduates at the large stables in the day-to-day care and feeding of the animals, those classes will most likely not be taught on-line.

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

Victoria Li and **Bill Campbell** are delighted to have a new grandson, **Flynn**, who weighed in at 6 lb. 7 oz. **Flynn's** mother is **Victoria's** daughter **Kimberly Hsu** and the father is her husband **Sidharta Gurung**. Both parents are MD's. Everyone is doing fine. **Victoria** was in Houston helping the new parents for most of July.



Bill Campbell and Victoria Li's newest grandchild Flynn Sidharta Gurung, born in Houston on June 30



7/20 Victoria Li with her new grandson Flynn

Kevin and **Rachel Dietz** are rightly concerned about the school situation in Austin this fall—all but **Kevin** are involved with schools. **Rachel**, who teaches creative writing at Lamar Middle School, is waiting to find out what AISD is planning. **Isabella** will be a senior at McCallum this year and **John** and **Francesca** will be entering freshmen. It is quite likely the three will opt for the on-line sessions rather than attending in person—at least until there is a vaccine.

Tommie Pinkard writes that she misses us all. She and her husband **Doyal** moved a little over 4 years ago to College Walk, a retirement community in Brevard, NC, where **Doyal's** sister **Carol** and her husband lived. **Doyal** died within a few months of their arrival. Now that not only **Doyal**, but his sister **Carol** and her husband **Wes**, have died, she is very lonesome, especially now, with that dreaded disease all around. Residents are pretty much stuck in their rooms—meals delivered to them three times a day. But they are all well. Strict rules keep everyone healthy. There are no group activities, not even meals. She had to cancel her personal trainer because he has clients all over town, so she is left with nurse pill dispensers and her cat box cleaner outer (as she has become a good friend). And the nurses, as well as the entire staff there, are friendly, efficient, and willing to do anything she asks as a favor. She and her cat **Zoroaster** keep each other company and sons **Chris** and **David** call frequently. Give **Tommie** a call at 828-884-8587 or write her at 100 B College Row, Apt. 117, Brevard NC 28712. Her e-mail is tommiewp@gmail.com. She would love to hear from you.

Fran Briggs has been reminiscing about taking her daughter and grandchildren **Stella** and **Giovanni Fracasso** to a Family Camp at Slumber Falls about 14 years ago. Most of the campers were from Cosmopolitan UCC in Dallas, but they welcomed the **Briggs'** clan into their activities and games. **Fran** remembers **Giovanni** asking **Charles Stark** if he could come back the next weekend. **Giovanni** has been back many summers since. This summer he has spent two weeks there as a counselor (following the use of masks and social distancing). Hurrah for the importance and influence of the Christian camping experience. **Giovanni** has plans to return to Denver U

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

in the fall. It's at least as certain as anything can be these days. **Fran** guesses that **Stella** will be going to school online for the first 3 weeks. **Stella** really wants to go back to in person classes.

Ann Locasio, new to our church community, finds that her coping strategies for the pandemic are morning coffee, meditation time, and a morning walk every day while it's still relatively cool. She hasn't been anywhere or done much of anything except stay home and avoid catching 'rona.

What do "senior seniors" do while "sheltered-in-place? Well, **Marilyn Gaddis** and **George Carruthers** have found some "time fillers!" Several times a day, three sets of twin fawns with their moms came to the bucket outside the dining area picture window for water. The young ones usually dance around and show off their running skills. Then their dads, all ten of them, come by to get their sip of water. They jostle each other for a spot and haven't yet poked out an eye. A fox family visits at night and birds come by for a bath. Recently, two armadillos visited. They were unable to reach over the edge for water. They ran around and around the bucket. One would reverse course and knock the other one over. The "downed" one would "pop up" and follow the leader. This went on for about 15 minutes! They haven't returned for another show. Other time fillers include; "church," old movies, Road Scholar lectures, Family ZOOMS, and e-mail news! They wanted to let everyone know that they're "surviving" in San Marcos!



7/24/20 9--or more-- deer outside Marilyn and George's window at dinner recently

Chester Rosson is pleased to report that his right eye is recuperating after a tear in his retina. The floaters seem to be fading instead of continuing to multiply. He compares the floaters to gnats flying around in his head all the time. He was lucky to catch the tear before it became a retinal collapse. **Dr. Lu** "welded" all in place with about twenty bursts of his space age ray gun. It was nerve-wracking and more painful than he had expected, but his treatment was done in just a few moments. He drove back home with the help of sunglasses.

Fred and **Juditha Burchsted** don't know that it's newsworthy, but they thought of Austin recently when they made a version of **Pat Oakes'** strawberry pie that they enjoyed when they last visited Austin. Both **Fred** and **Juditha** are still working, however, both working from home since early March. They both spend a lot of time on Zoom meetings—sometimes at the same time—one in the living room and the other in the family room. It was worse when they were both lecturing in the Spring, as it will be again in a few weeks when the Fall semester starts. Unfortunately, their college-age son **Gus** is stuck at home, physically between them while **Fred** and **Juditha** endlessly blather via Zoom, trying to study music theory online at the moment and have some or any social life. He plays virtual scrabble with 2 friends which is fun. He baked the three of them a wonderful cheesecake recently. He does not like virtual classes at all, and will probably take a break this fall if that's all that is available to him.

To keep busy and have fun with photos, **Pat Oakes** has been spending hours and hours culling, editing, and labeling her thousands and thousands of pictures in her photo file on her computer. She often sends out old photos to folks with the subject line Memory lane. Recently she heard back from **Dan Jeffery** who was very active in the church in the early 2000s. **Dan** was pleased to get the photo and sent the following. "For any who might not remember me, that was me with the umbrella. I stood still, keeping **George** in the shade while he did all the hard work. It was one of those days with intensely hot sun. I'm sure I was glad not to be doing the actual work on the ground. I live in Eastern Oregon now, in a rural area, a town called Hermiston with my wife of 10 years and a grandbaby. I have nothing but fond

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

memories of my time with the church there. I get to see **Jaime** and talk with him a few times each year. I have a long graying ponytail now. I am an Episcopalian again... for the past ten years. It is the denomination I was born into. It was the denomination I ran from and would never return to. I believe that UCC helped to prepare me with spiritual openness, and now I have returned to my spiritual home.”



8/28/06 Dan Jeffery and George Hetrick helping Nancy Edison with her flat tire after church on a very hot Sunday

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law thirty years ago on July 26, 1990, when **George H.W. Bush** signed it into law. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. It is quite telling to see how our building was designed in the 1920s. Our church finally addressed some of these issues in 2007 with extensive remodeling that improved access into the sanctuary and created a handicapped accessible restroom on the main floor. Of course, access to the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Towering wing is still a problem.



Rev. S. E. (Jack) Frost-Jr.-about 1930—note the steep steps into both the sanctuary and the fellowship room—and no railings.



About 1943 Congregational Church of Austin group photo—Ralph Bickler on the far left at the front and Dr. Kuehne (with his distinctive beard) 5th from the left —note the trees growing in what is now our relatively new patio

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, (cont.)



11/4/07 New front of the church—note that the stairs into the sanctuary are no longer there



The church on Dec. 27, 2009—our new access to the sanctuary and to the Towery wing from San Antonio St.—there are still steps from 23rd St.

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, (cont.)



1/24/10 View of the church from the 3rd floor of the parking garage across the street—note the access to the church from San Antonio St.