

# THE VISITOR

**The Congregational Church of Austin    United Church of Christ**

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**Statement of Faith,**  
**Congregational Church of Austin,**  
**United Church of Christ**

**We are a people united in Christ.**

*God calls us to be a loving and inclusive community of faith, a people united and uniting. God calls us to welcome all people in the name of Jesus Christ, who welcomes us.*

**We are a people who sing God's praises.**

*God calls us to invite all people to participate with us in life-renewing worship, to cry out in our brokenness, and to celebrate God's grace and blessing upon us.*

**We are a people who seek God's ways.**

*God calls us to discover God's word in the Bible, in our rich heritage, in faithful witness to the living Word, and in the fresh winds of the Spirit.*

**We are a people who serve God's world.**

*God calls us to promote the integrity, justice, mercy, and peace God intends for all creation, and to reach out in ministries and partnerships of prophetic criticism and care.*

**We are a people who share life's journey.**

*God calls us to support one another and to share in the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, of all God's people, both in the church and the world.*

As a church deeply committed to Christ's ministry of liberating, healing, and reconciling the world, and to the prophetic call to "do justice" in this world, we find that the following World Council of Churches Statement of Faith also reflects our commitment to work for a "new earth where justice and peace will flourish."

## **An Affirmation of Faith**

### **World Council of Churches**

We believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people;

in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us, and to free us from all forms of oppression;

in the Spirit of God, who works through all who are turned toward the truth;

in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people;

in God's promise to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all humankind.

We do not believe in the right of the strongest, nor the force of arms, nor the power of oppression.

We believe in human rights, in the solidarity of all people, in the power of non-violence.

We do not believe in racism, in the power that comes from wealth and privilege, or in any established order that enslaves.

We believe that all men and women are equally human, that order based on violence and injustice is not order.

We do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable, and peace unobtainable.

We believe in the beauty of simplicity, in love with open hands, in peace on earth.

We do not believe that suffering need be in vain, or that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended. We dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish.

## **April Visitor Deadline March 26, 2021**

### **Church Leadership**

Deacons Chair	Jen Howicz
Outreach Team	open
Moderator	Joy Penticuff
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Jaime Hadley
Christian Education Coordinators	open
Youth Sunday School	open
Clerk	Reuel Nash
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmaster	Mel Oakes
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

**Heart of Texas Association News**  
**March**  
**by Liz Nash**

**A**s I write, we are just a couple of days past the very difficult days of our freeze, power outages, and water problems. Many in our churches have suffered. We have had illness and death over this past week among our churches. Many of us faced situations in our homes that we never thought we would face--extreme cold, lack of water, the inability to get out or even communicate at times. Some faced these while being ill at the same time. Others who did not have problems or had fewer issues to deal with offered help and care with great generosity. My heart and prayers go with all of you. We have had several churches with building issues from burst pipes, including (to my knowledge as I write) Friends Congregational College Station, Faith UCC in Bryan, St. John's UCC in Burton, and Church of the Savior in Cedar Park. Slumber Falls Camp has also sustained damage. The United Church of Christ Disaster Ministry is reaching out to the churches in our Conference with support. Our Conference Minister **Campbell Lovett** has been reaching out to our churches, and I have been in touch with a number of our pastors. If there are ways I can support your congregation, please let me know ([lizknash@gmail.com](mailto:lizknash@gmail.com), 512-799-2782).

I ask you at this time to pray for our faithful brother in Christ, our former Conference Minister **Douglas Anders**. **Douglas**, who moved home to the St. Louis area when he retired, has been fighting colon and very aggressive liver cancer now for a number of years. While continuing to serve the church and his local community in numerous ways, **Douglas** has undergone several forms of treatment, including travel to MD Anderson in Houston for experimental treatment. He is in the final stages of his life now. His example of faith and service to us while he was with us and, in the past few years, during his illness, has been extraordinary and inspiring. Let us pray for him and give thanks for his years of ministry with us.

**Carl Schwartz-King**, our Association Vice-Moderator, a licensed minister in the Heart of Texas Association, and a commissioned minister in the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, has resigned his position at United Christian Church as Minister of Congregational Care at United Christian Church of Austin. He has served in this position for the past five

years, giving generously of his time and talents. Following a call to ministry, **Carl** completed the Certificate program at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to be able to serve after retiring from his position as Manager of Emergency and Trauma Services at St. David's Medical Center in Austin. He has served the Heart of Texas Association in many ways, and I am happy to say that he will be continuing in that work. If elected at our Spring meeting, he will serve as our moderator for the next term. I know United appreciates **Carl's** ministry, and I look forward to his gift of excellent leadership in this Association.

Our Association Spring meeting date will be set soon. We will be having an Ecclesiastical Council for **Amelia Fulbright** for Privilege of Call in the United Church of Christ. We anticipate having one more Ecclesiastical Council. More details and a meeting date will come soon.

Blessings in Christ,  
**Liz Nash**, Association Minister

**Personals**  
by Pat Oakes

**M**any thanks to our dedicated, long-time custodian **Victor Cardenas** who was so concerned about the safety of our church building during our recent frigid weather that he came in (driving his 4-wheel drive vehicle) and spent two nights at the church. **Victor**, we appreciate you so much. We are delighted to report that no water pipes burst.

Folks in the church rallied to help those who were in need during and after the storms—in our own community and in the wider community. The Deacons activated the telephone tree and called everyone they could reach to see if they were taken care of or needed anything. Deacons and others who were helping with the calling and/or providing food and water were **CJ Wood, Warinda Harris** and sons **Will** and **Alden**, **Whit Bodman** (who opened up his house so that folks could come, fill containers of water, and take it to folks who needed it), **Lynne Lemley, John Goff, Carolyn Thompson, Joy Penticuff, Sarah Bentley**, and **Jen Howicz**. **Liz Nash, Warinda**, her husband **John** (who both know how to drive in snow and ice from their years in Boston), and **Alden** also helped with some deliveries for Central Texas Interfaith (CTI). **Alden** also drafted his girlfriend and another friend to help with the deliveries from CTI. **Tom VandeStadt** and **Robin Chapman** brought water to help folks who live north. There may be others whose names have been missed. If so, let me know and we will give recognition to you in the next Visitor.

Lots of tears were shed on Sunday, Feb. 28, during the church YouTube service and the following Zoom Joys and Concerns session as it was Pastor **Tom VandeStadt's** final Sunday with us. **Tom** spoke briefly at the beginning of the service about how meaningful his favorite Bible verses were to him (Micah 6, v.8 and Luke 9, v.46-48) and how much his almost 20 years at the church meant to him. The Deacons had requested that folks who wanted to could send in a brief message or video to be shared with everyone. Among those participating from near and far were **Fran and Rambie Briggs, Pam Tucker, Andy Streitmeier, Colin Ferguson** and family, **Andrea Low, Stephen Russell, Donna Cravens, Martin Garrison, Mel and Pat Oakes, Christine Tata, Cheryl Appel, Sarah Darter,**

**Joy Penticuff, John and Carol Burlinson, Liz Nash, Jaana and Ella Rehbein, Jen Howicz, Barbara Burnham, Ellie Nash, Bill Beardall, Bill and Joan Mueller.** **Tom** was even “**Nodded**” as she created one of her signature songs sung to the tune of “Jesus, What a Wonderful Child” but titled “Cheering for Tom” and accompanied by **Jonathan Geer**. If you would like to see the whole service, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldWNWh0V2SM> and look at the Feb. 28th service. On the service for Feb. 21, there is also a worship gift slide show celebrating Tom's time with us.

During the recent devastating snow and ice storms and resulting power outages and frozen pipes which blanketed Texas, there was an unexpected bonus for **John Goff** (who hardly reads “real” books any more) who knew the battery on his Kindle was used up. In desperation he found a “real” book his dad had given him years ago—**The Talisman** by Sir Walter Scott, originally published in 1825—a wonderful edition with great illustrations, a built in bookmark—a true classic set during the 3rd crusade. **John** made quite a lot of headway while the power was off for several days, so vowed after the power came back on that he would finish it. The only real damage to their property was to the nozzles on his hoses outside.



2/17/21 Engrossed in THE TALISMAN, John Goff and cats kept warm during the Austin snowpocalypse

Photo on next page

## Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes



2/17/21 Gail Christeson staying warm with reliable kitty power

**Ann Locasio** had a good time writing about her survival experience during the Texas Snowpocalypse. " My news is that I was without power for two days and nights. At one point it was 49 degrees in my apartment. So I was without power but by no means powerless. I had a momentary flash of horror and misery when I realized that it took an electric spark to light my gas stove, but my kind friend **Kay** reminded me that I could light it with matches. Problem solved, and hot instant coffee and oatmeal brightened up my world. I conserved cell phone power by turning the phone off when I wasn't using it, so I could check in with several friends each night and say, 'I made it!' When the snowstorm abated I charged the phone in my SUV. I call her Bertha because she's big. Bertha provided a roomy living room on wheels at times and I would go sit in her and turn the heat on while charging the phone. The power came back and then running water went away. It returned eventually with low pressure and the Health Department said we had to boil it before we drank it. At least I was climate-comfortable while pouring gallons of water into the commode to make it flush and boiling water for my tea and coffee. I won't soon forget sleeping in three layers of clothing under five blankets. And those necessary nocturnal restroom trips reminded me of winter visits to my **Great Aunt Josie's** outhouse in rural Indiana back in the 1960s. Fortunately I had a decent emergency kit on hand and was glad to have a flashlight with batteries, a battery-operated radio, matches, canned nonperishable food, and bottled water. I have never been so thankful for the sound of a thermostat kicking on, for internet access and a

functional toilet. My gratitude list got longer and slightly more unusual. I can't decide whether I'm a pioneer woman in the Wild West or a Girl Scout trying to earn a merit badge for survival skills."

**Ruth Koenig** reports, "Brookdale, the senior independent living facility where I live, was without electricity for several days, but they managed to feed us well and we piled on sweaters and coats to keep warm. We were among the lucky ones. On a more personal note, my son, daughter-in-law, and I took part in a memorial service in D.C. on Saturday, Feb. 20th, for **Sue**, a dear niece, via Zoom. **Sue** had advanced Alzheimer's and her sister and her mother (my oldest sister) had already succumbed to the disease. The family are members of a Congregational Church in D.C. and **Sue** was active in the church. She, with one of her daughters, had been active in the choir up until a few months ago. Although **Sue** was a beloved elementary school teacher, she sang in her college choirs, and so there was lots of wonderful music in the service. I get impatient with Zoom and the like, but its availability meant that about 150 friends and family members were able to hear and share our memories. We were sad that Sue was no longer with us, but relieved that she was free at last."

**Barbara Burnham** lost power for four days. After the first cold hours, son **Robin** came over and picked **Barbara** up and took her home to stay with his family. While **Barbara** was not too excited about having to leave home, she was delighted to spend four days with **Robin** and **Julia** and her two granddaughters!

**Reuel** and **Liz Nash** lost power for 14 hours on Thursday the 11th -- right when it first got cold. They built a fire -- the first they'd built in this fireplace (they moved several years ago within Austin) -- and slept on the couch in front of the fireplace, with each of us getting up to put another log on the fire when we noticed it. Power was fairly steady after that -- going off for a minute once. They think this is because they're on the same circuit as a nearby fire station. Daughter **Becky** lost power at her house early Monday morning, and she and her roommate came to stay with them until 2/20. She had a broken pipe (that **Reuel** repaired) and a broken tankless water heater (that is beyond his talents, he says). Pam Tucker came over and took a shower at

**Personals (cont)**  
**by Pat Oakes**

their house on the 21st. She had similar issues with her tankless water heater.

The **Nash** family is celebrating two new jobs in the extended family. Congratulations to **Louis Rodgers**, the spouse of **Ellie Nash** and the father of **Vivi**, who passed his bar exam in Montreal on the first try and was offered his dream job—an internship with Legal Aid in the criminal justice area. Needless to say, he accepted and the whole family is delighted. Congratulations are also in order for **Annie Nash** who has just started a new job in Manchester, VT. She has been studying interior design for the past two years and just finished a summer internship. She is now working for an interior design firm, Northshire Living and is working with 3-D renderings.

**Warinda** happily reports that both she and her mom **Barbara** have now both been fully vaccinated. Warinda drove her mom to the Delco Center and was told during the registration process for the first vaccination, that **Warinda**, since she is the caregiver for her mom, could also be vaccinated at the same time. She and **Barbara** were most impressed with how helpful the folks from the fire department were as they were assisting folks get in and out quickly.

**Beth Gleason** was on her way to chaplaincy class in downtown San Antonio on the 18th and stopped to take some pictures of snow on the River Walk - so pretty! **Beth** lost power at home for six days and had no water for seven. She worked Wednesday to Friday of that week and was the only chaplain in the hospital for two of those days because everyone else was too afraid to drive on the roads (not this Maine girl!).



2/18/21 River Walk in the Snow

**Pam Tucker** writes, "Last week (Feb 14th-21st) was a rough week. We did get back to work for half day (She is the CEO of Utility Composites, Inc.) on Friday, but off for the rest of the week (everyone was paid). On the home front, my power was out for about 2.5 days. I had a great attitude until just after day two I read on the Austin Energy website that it could be seven more days. That was NOT helpful to my mental state! The power did come back in the evening of the 3rd night and I was so happy. My tankless water heater froze early in the cold weather, so no hot water. When it thawed last Thursday evening, it was spewing water (outside, thankfully), so I had to turn off the water main. Later I went to look at it in the daylight and saw a valve on the cold water inlet to the tankless water heater. I was able to close that valve and turn on the main without leaks, confirming that it was not the pipe that froze, but the water heater unit. The good: I have running water (cold only); the bad: a more costly fix.

## Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

Since fixing either problem will take some weeks, I am so happy to have running water! On Feb. 27th, I still had no water heater. It will be quite awhile. I still cannot get anyone to respond to me. I shower at the gym on the way to work, so all good. Now to the happy news. I have a new puppy. She is named Piper and is a joy, but those sharp teeth are a menace!" Photo attached (she is alive and not a stuffed animal).



2/5/21 Pam's perky new puppy Piper, a golden doodle

**Jonathan Geer** wrote, "We were actually so incredibly fortunate and we never lost power or running water. No issues with our pipes or anything. We feel so lucky and are thankful that we came through the snowpocalypse unscathed. It's good we had power since both **Xitlali** and I have been fighting off a cough and some congestion. **Roberto** made a run to Target on...maybe Thursday I think? And he came home and brought things out of the shopping bags: 'This was the last pepper they had. 'This was one of the only vegetables left. I got this frozen turkey in a bag.' haha... and of course we couldn't find milk for **Xitlali** anywhere! But we are all ok and back to normal now. It was a wild adventure for everyone and we're grateful to have not suffered without power or water!"



2/15/21 Xitlali enjoying the snow in her neighborhood with her dad Roberto Hernandez

**Donna Cravens**, our wonderful office administrator, never lost power in her mobile home community in Maxwell near San Marcos—there were rolling blackouts and one day of low water pressure. All of the neighbors were helping each other. **Donna** grew up in the country and knew to wrap her pipes properly, but some of the neighbors did have broken pipes. She finally made it in to church on Saturday and found that everything was OK. Her dogs Diamond and Sandy were completely mystified by the snow—enjoy the video.

<https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMeloakesFamilySite/Images/DonnaCravensSnowMovie.mov>

**Joy Penticuff** didn't just have to worry about important people in her life during Snowpocalypse—she had a horse to think about! She reports, "The barn where Armani is boarded and where I take jumping lessons on him three times a week is a lovely 160-acre property named Oak Haven. It has three barns; the main barn, which is a very fancy two-story stone building, a smaller barn nearby, and Armani's 6-horse shed row, which is distant from the other barns. When the cold weather set in, **Debbie** and **Willie**, owners of Oak Haven, moved Armani and the other horses from the shed row into the big main barn.

## Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

The guys who take care of the horses live in nice accommodations on the second floor of the main barn, so having all the horses (about 25) in a small area made their care much easier, especially once the freezing cold and snow and ice hit. These two barns have big doors at each end, so in the bad weather the doors were kept shut. The horses have warm winter blankets, so they were comfortable. Hay and grain were next door in the hay barn, so there was a good supply of feed. The big issue was water. When the power went out, the pumps to the four wells froze and water was in short supply. I heard that the men brought in snow and somehow melted it to keep the horses watered. The horses were in their stalls for a total of about nine days since they couldn't be turned out to pasture until the ground dried out a bit. As you can imagine, once released from their confinement, most of the horses were like kids on a sugar high. My dear friend **Jeannie** and my trainer **Clare** put each horse on a long lead line and had the horse trot and canter in a circle around her, (this is called lunging). Lunging was a precaution to keep the horses from running too fast and possibly injuring themselves. Cantering in a circle is a much more controlled situation than just letting a horse loose in a large area. All in all, I think Armani fared better than many of us humans. On Monday the 22nd, to celebrate the fabulous weather and to thank the men and **Alma**, our barn manager, we had a champagne party outside of the main barn. I'm including a photo. The person on crutches is my Senior Trainer **Janet Christie**. She broke her fibula falling on the ice. I'm the one in the mask—ever the nurse!!"



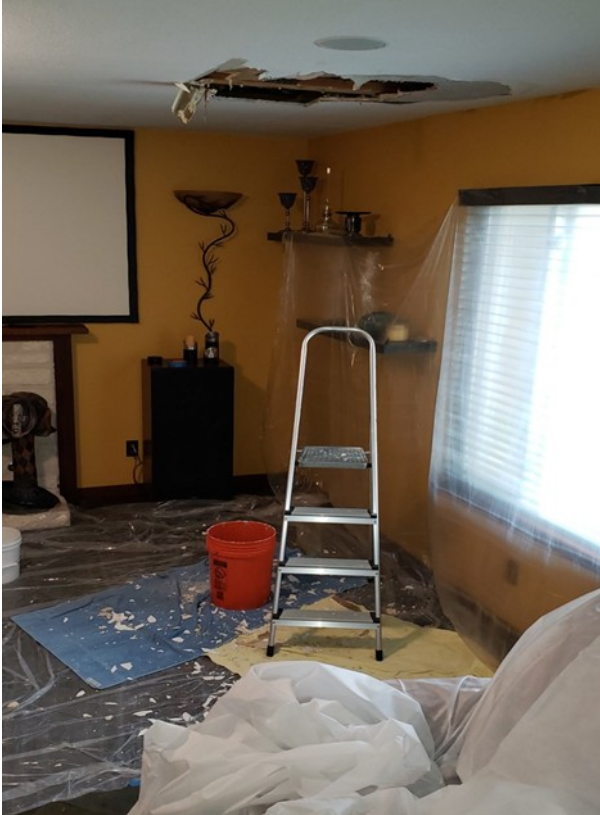
2/22/21—champagne party at Armani's stable—Joy Penticuff center right with mask

**Bill** and **Betty Phillips** and their daughter **Katie** also had outdoor critters to think about at their farm near Creedmoor. Their very large potbellied pig is now too large to get into the house—and there was no question of bringing the horses inside. The outdoor shelter just was not adequate. **Katie** looked at her Fitbit and realized that she had walked 8 miles in one day checking on the animals. She ran out of horse feed and arranged a barter with a neighbor—**Katie** walked over and helped her winterize the neighbor's dog house in exchange for some horse feed. They had rolling power outages through the Pedernales Co-op--not the almost complete breakdown that was had in Austin. They used their outdoor propane grill and cooked outside when it was light outside. They also used solar lights which provided some light at night in the house. Daughter **Stephanie** and **Kathy Weiner** who also live out in the country were out helping their neighbors. Everyone was boiling their water in the area.

**Jamie Hadley** got a double whammy. He says, "I lost power for eight hours on Thursday 2/11 with the first round of ice, and was then without power again from Monday 2/15 at 2am through Wed 2/17 at 5pm, so almost 3 full days, with only a couple of short breaks where the power came on for 60-90 minutes and allowed me to charge the phone and raise the inside temp a few degrees. When the power came back on the water stopped, and I boiled for a few days like everyone else. Monday 2/15 was already a work holiday for me, and Tuesday and Wednesday became vacation days for me since I had no power. Since it was often in the 40's inside my house, I quite enjoyed myself outside on the couple of sunny days and set up a campfire in the front yard where I greeted the neighbors walking by and allowed them to warm their hands. Unfortunately I had a plumbing issue on Saturday 2/13 that was totally unrelated to the weather. A leaky sink in the master bath wet the cabinets and the sub-floor beneath and came dripping down through my living room ceiling. So I am on a list for plumbing repair and sheetrock repair and might have this gaping hole in my LR ceiling for a while as the plumbers and sheetrockers take care of more urgent needs for the next few weeks! Really bad timing on the part of my leaky faucet!"

Photos on next page

**Personals (cont)**  
by Pat Oakes



2/13/21 Jamie's plumbing sprung a leak unrelated to the freeze at the same time, resulting in this.



2/18/21 Deer came calling at Jamie's



2/15/21 Jamie greeting neighbors with a campfire in his front yard



2/16/21 Ingenious Jaime used a meat thermometer to tell what the temperature was in his house

**Marilyn Gaddis** and **George Carruthers** report that they did well in the recent snow storm. **Marilyn** says, "We're fine! Lucky to have had a friend doing some remodeling work for us. He was able to thaw pipes, get the well pump thawed and running, and to repair a broken pipe! Still sharing water with neighbors (as of Feb. 22nd). On February 1st, while eating breakfast, **Marilyn** and **George** watched a large flock of colorful northern song birds land on and near their deer watering bucket. The competition for water was so great that they were standing on top on each other! They returned for water several times during the day and roosted in the surrounding trees that night. The show continued the next day, but by evening, they were on their way south. Then, a large flock of robins took over the yard and stayed for several days. **Marilyn** notes in retrospect that she should have realized that the birds' presence was telling them that a BIG storm was headed their way.

The **Dierksen's** were without power for 72 hours and without water for 48 hours (some overlap). **Faye** was delighted to find a large package of disposable diapers in the house that they had not used (they

## Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

have been using cloth ones) and they also found a package of disposable baby wipes, so **Deek** was all set. Then when they got water back, they had to boil what water they had for drinking and cooking for several more days. **Andy** kept the fire going by bringing in firewood keeping everyone warmish—at least near the fireplace. As you can see by the photo, **Deek** was a happy camper.



2/16/21 Deek Dierksen enjoying the warmth of the fire on a snowy day when the power was out

**Carolyn Thompson** had been down on the farm in south Texas and got back to Austin just as it turned cold. She had enough food on hand to get her through a day or two, but she was not prepared for the ice on Thursday and loss of power that night. She was glad she had kept some wool sweaters and down comforters from her years in Massachusetts! When the power came back the next day the first thing I did was hard boil a half dozen eggs and make a pot of coffee. What food she had was not going to be very useful if it was all raw and frozen and she had no way to heat it. Her daughter was a dear to pick up her curbside order on Saturday! She cooked on the weekend and was doing pretty well until the power cut off again on Wednesday, Feb. 17. She spent most of the day camped out in her big closet with a good flashlight and her Kindle as it was the least cold place to be. She did rig up a “camp stove” on her kitchen counter by putting a candle in a heavy soup pot, a

grate on top and a tin pan to heat coffee and her canned ravioli. The funniest thing that happened to her was the first night it snowed. In a half-awake state she kept wondering why she could not hear the snow plows that usually get to work soon after a storm begins. They were running late!



2/15/21 Carolyn Thompson used some ingenuity to rig up this small “cookstove” while her power was off

**Dennis Schneider** (a member in the 1970s with his wife **Kazuko** and their infant daughter **Takako**) writes from Tokyo, Japan, "I've been reading about your (Texas's) adventures. I know Austin doesn't deal well with that sort of thing. I first came to Austin in January 1973 for grad school, and I think maybe during that same month there was a bit of freezing rain so everything was coated with a very thin layer of ice which of course is slicker than snow. I saw in the newspaper that someone had managed to drive their car into their backyard swimming pool. Another time I got up and there was snow just like a powdered sugar coating, not a measurable amount. I was getting ready to leave for class when it occurred to me to turn on the TV. Sure enough, classes at UT were cancelled for the day. Anyway, I'm glad you made it through the power outage with no serious problems. Even if you have gas heat, it's usually controlled by electricity, and now we can't even do our

## Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

email without electricity!”

**Dave and Sara Ross** had two 36 hour outages separated by 18 hours of power. They had so many blankets over them that they could barely move! They were able to make use of their camper by opening the garage and firing up the gas stove to cook. They only lost water for four hours. Thanks to a warning from son **Andy** they had saved a few gallons of drinking water. On their last day of outage, their neighbors on the other side of the street had power and they ran an extension cord over the street so they could power up the battery to run **Dave’s** CPAP machine and their phones. When **Sara** wrote this a few days later, it was 72 out and all the windows were open to get some fresh air in the house. Don’t you love Texas weather!



2/17/21 Sara Ross busy cooking in their camper which was parked in their garage with necessary fuel

For a different perspective, **Cheryl Appel** writes from Madison, WI. "I am glad to hear that people made it through the power and water shortages. Although there have been no power outages in Wisconsin, it has been very cold. February 22 was the first day in a month that we warmed up to 32 degrees, and we had had several weeks of below zero weather, 20-30 degrees below average for February, with wind chills up to 30 below. Lots of burst pipes and overflowing homeless shelters but fortunately no known weather related deaths. The ice fishermen here are back in action (see photo). Madison has formal and informal winter art in public places and yards. Wisconsin is not well organized in terms of vaccine appointments and although I am on a list, I

had not been notified of possible openings. Glad to hear during Joys and Concerns (on Zoom on 2/21) that people there are getting vaccinated. We don’t have a centralized appointment site online now, though there are hopes for getting one up and running in March. (But there were hopes for February too, sigh.) I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time and got a leftover dose while I was at Walgreens picking up medication for a homebound friend. Quite a gift. I have friends who are spending lots of time on the phone and computer trying to schedule something, and some have been successful, but it is a process. I will miss seeing spring in Austin again this year. But I am hoping for a visit again when it’s safe to travel. Miss you all!”



2/21 Monona Bay in Madison

**Mel and Pat Oakes** fared fairly well during the snow and ice event. They were without power for 45 frigid hours—the temps in the house were in the low 40s. They relied on their fireplace (lots of firewood out in the backyard which intrepid **Mel** brought in regularly). Wonderful neighbors checked on them often. They managed some culinary delights in the fireplace—cups of tea, quesadillas, and they even broke out the chafing dish when they found some hidden away **Sterno** to heat up food. It looks like their worst casualty is **Pat’s** African violet—**Pat** knew that she had never been so cold, but apparently it was a struggle for the violet, too. Their best news was learning on Feb. 18 that their daughter **Beth** who is on the music faculty at the University of Iowa in Iowa City (specializing in chamber music) had been selected by the Council on Teaching to receive the **2021 President and Provost Award for Teaching Excellence**, complete with a \$3000 stipend.

## History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes

Our church is coming up on its 120th birthday. Below you see the photo taken on our 110th. From “A Brief History of the Congregational Church of Austin” compiled from the histories of the church at the time of our 100th, we learn "The history of the Congregational Church of Austin, Texas, begins in the early part of the 20th century. Reverend **J. Ritchie Briggs**, minister of the Tenth Street Methodist Church, along with fifty-six prominent members of the Tenth Street Methodist Church, signed Articles of Incorporation on March 21, 1901. They filed papers with the State of Texas on April 2, 1901, to become an independent church named The Methodist Church of Austin. Reverend **Dr. Briggs** had been pastor of the Tenth Street Methodist Church from 1896 to 1898. After agreeing to become the pastor of the new church, **Dr. Briggs** preached the first sermon on Easter at the Odd Fellows Hall located at the northeast corner of East Ninth Street and Congress Avenue. “Our current building designed by church member, **Hugo Kuehne (Hildegard Kuehne Everett’s uncle)**, was dedicated on December 9, 1923. If my math is correct, the 100th anniversary of the 1923 building is coming up in 2 years.

Since we are in a period of transition right now compounded by the pandemic/quarantine, perhaps we can plan on doing something really special for our 125th—5 years hence. However, it would be great to have a group photo taken within a month or so of our getting back to our sanctuary—just to show that we survived this past year!



4/3/11 110th birthday of the church—To see the names of everyone and the photo in a larger format, click on the link below.  
<https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/CCAHistory/CCAGroup2011.html>.

You should see some familiar faces!!