

How does the soul survive? It is the essential question. And the response is: through love and imagination.

Azar Nasifi, Reading Lolita in Tehran

The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant consciousness around us.

Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination

A professor of western literature who earned her Ph.D. in the United States, a secular woman with a fiercely independent mind, Azar Nafisi found she could no longer teach within the Islamic Republic of Iran. She left the university, started a clandestine book club in her apartment, and invited a select group of women—secular and Muslim—to participate. Together, they read and critiqued works by Victor Nabakov, Jane Austin, William James, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. More importantly, they read and critiqued their own lives, discovering that they too—women living in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its strictly enforced dress codes and stringent morality—were characters in an unfolding drama.

What interested me most about Nafisi's book was her reflection on the ways people use their imaginations to either enhance or diminish human life. In her view, Ayatollah Khomeini used his imagination to diminish human life. In his imagination, Khomeini constructed a picture of the ideal Muslim society, one that existed in a golden age long ago but then disappeared, the victim of the modern West's corrupting influences. Khomeini set out to recreate Iranian society according to the ideal Muslim society in his imagination. He twisted, bent, and shaped Iran, trying to make the nation and its people look like the picture in his head.

But as Khomeini strove to force these women to conform to his mental picture of what the ideal Muslim woman should look like and how the ideal Muslim woman should behave, they resisted by fueling the power of their own imaginations through literature. The literature they studied revealed that the reality in which they lived was not the only one possible. Other realities were possible. Other realities existed. Another reality could exist for them, as long as they could imagine it as a possibility. These women's imaginations became the final outpost of hope and resistance within a reality that diminished their lives and wore down their souls.

As the church, we too have our literature. It is filled with characters like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, Paul, and John of Patmos—prophetic ministers who provided our spiritual ancestors with powerful images of an alternative reality to the reality in which our ancestors lived, a reality that often wore down their souls. These prophets and visionaries told our ancestors that this alternative reality was God's promise. The images they used to represent this alternative reality tapped deeply into our ancestors' psyches, emotions, histories, and faith traditions. They called these images the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God.

I wonder whether these images of the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God resonate as deeply and powerfully for us today as they did for our spiritual ancestors long ago. We live thousands of miles and years from the old Jerusalem, many of us have never been to present-day Jerusalem and have little emotional attachment to it, and we live not under the rule of a sovereign king in a kingdom but within a democracy.

Are these Biblical images of the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God too far removed and archaic to fuel our imaginations in powerful ways? Do we need to create new images that tap deeply into our own psyches and emotions, our own history and faith tradition, one that includes Isaiah, Jesus, and John of Patmos but continues well beyond them? Do we need to translate the ancient images into powerful new ones that motivate

us to respond to our current reality with greater resistance, and to live out the alternative we imagine with greater hope?

In other words, does the church's literature not simply provide us with ready-made images from another time and place, but confront us with the challenge *to use our imaginations* to create images that are as powerful for us in our time and place as The New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God were for our ancestors?

Finally, what is the relationship between God and our rather fickle human imaginations? How do we know we are imagining a vision that is consistent with God's desire for creation? How do we live out the new creation we imagine without forcing other people to conform to this ideal vision in our heads?

These are issues with which I struggle, and I would truly love some discussion partners willing to wrestle them with me. If you would, please share your thoughts and pop me an e-mail response. Let me know what you think. Shed some more light on this for me. Thanks so much!

Tom

Outreach Alert

400 Voices Project

We don't know the final weight yet, but we filled 13 backpacks with school supplies and had a box full of extras that must have weighed at least 50 pounds all by itself. And on top of that, we raised \$660 in cash donations. Thanks to everyone who donated to the 400 Voices Project, which will directly benefit the children of the Trepca school in Kosova. Dita Dauti, who made a presentation to the church in August, will travel to Kosova next month to deliver the supplies and bring back more letters, photos and stories.

Freeze Night Shelter

Did you feel that cold front come by recently? Summer is over (well, mostly anyway) and it won't be long before a nip is in the air. This winter is projected to be colder and wetter than usual (thanks to El Nino), so we anticipate plenty of nights when the weather dips below freezing. As we have for many years now, we will host the Freeze Night shelter for homeless youth in our basement. We split the nights and costs with St. Austin's. Professional staff are hired through Lifeworks, and church volunteers help set up, cook a hearty dinner, and clean up afterwards. Please consider volunteering for this ministry.

Calvert Fund Redux

The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to a microlender in Bangladesh brought to everyone's consciousness this tremendous tool for achieving economic justice. Two years ago we participated in a micro-lending endeavor by donating ~\$1300 to the Calvert Social Investment Foundation (www.calvertfoundation.org) for a year's time, after which the funds were withdrawn and given to the South Central Conference's border outreach program. The Outreach Board would like to do this again, except this time maintain the funds as a long-term investment, adding to it through continued donations and profits from our fair trade coffee sales. Our pastor has donated the first \$100, and asks anyone who is so inclined to match it with any amount, large or small. Just write a check to the church and put "Calvert Fund" in the memo. We need to raise at least \$1000 for the initial investment.

SAY “CHEESE”

This is a heads-up everyone – heads up and say, “cheese”!! You may remember a project was started to create a picture directory. Unfortunately, Betty Bodman’s face broke the camera and things were put on hold for a while. Now the deacons are hoping to make that long awaited picture directory a reality and plan on taking (or re-taking if you wish) pictures of the congregation this fall. Start practicing that big smile

Chairs of our Boards

Trustees:	Reuel Nash
Deacons:	Betty Bodman
Christian Education:	Nancy Edison & Doyal Pinkard
Christian Outreach:	John Goff

SAVE THE DATES!

The Christian Education Board invites you to lend a hand, enjoy a great church evening, or join the worship service for our Christmas play on the following dates:

Saturday, November 4th, 10 a.m. to noon: Clean-up work party for elementary Sunday School Room and, if time, the adjoining rooms. The time will include clearing paint off the windows. Our kids now are looking forward to having a new turn at window paint during Sunday School, and they will appreciate our efforts. We also hope to clear out old Christmas play materials and other “treasures” that are cluttering the room.

Friday evening, December 1st: An Advent celebration for our church family that will include sharing dinner, making Advent crafts and decorations, and joining to put some of these on a Christmas tree.. We are still in the planning stages, but we know this will be a fun way to share the beginning of Advent.

Sunday morning, December 24th: We will share our annual Christmas play during worship. Be there to enjoy what our kids, youth, and participating adults bring before the congregation.

We hope to see you at one or all of these events.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Three items are keeping the Trustees busy these days: the construction work of Phase I of our renovation, the budget for 2007, and repairs to the portico roof and masonry.

A glance into the kitchen area will tell you how the construction is coming along. Work on the wheelchair ramp and garden area will begin once the inside work is finished.

All of the Boards should be working on budget figures for 2007. At our last meeting the Trustees discussed funding for replacement of major building infrastructure over the years. For example, we have the estimated lifetimes and replacement costs for various parts of the air conditioning system. We should be putting aside money in anticipation of the need to replace these systems. We believe this infrastructure replacement fund should be a regular, formal part of the Trustees' budget. However, due to the major expenditures on construction this year, we will wait to start this until the 2008 budget.

One major expense that wasn't in the plans is repair of the roof and masonry of the portico outside Fellowship Hall. The limestone lentils over one arch will need to be replaced with duplicates, bricks in this area will be removed, cleaned, and reused, and the roof will be replaced with a new design that will not have the same drainage problems as the old roof. These costs are to be paid primarily from the capital fund.

PERSONALS **by Pat Oakes**

Nodie Murphy, choir director *par excellence*, reports that **our church choir** was fantastic and fabulous at the Music for Missions Festival which was held at United Christian Church on Sunday, October 1, to celebrate that church's 15th anniversary. It was both a concert and an offering to benefit the two UCC churches in Austin. The concert raised over \$2000! Folks participated from different church choirs and special music was also performed. Nodie was so proud of our group which included not only "old faithful" choir members, but several brand new ones as well. The home choir from the United Christian Church sang first and our choir was second on the program (pianist Aaron Carter-Cohn had to get back home to give a piano lesson). The first number was a William Byrd anthem which the choir sang for us in September. Nodie pronounced it as an absolutely great job. Our amazing Melanie Wilkinson joined the choir in their second number in the great "He Never Failed Me Yet" by Robert Ray. She and the choir blew the audience away. When they finished, everyone in the audience yelled and screamed, clapped and went crazy!! Other churches sang--Bethany Christian Church, a dulcimer and autoharp group, a church from Taylor sent a children's choir who signed an anthem which was very touching, Central Christian Church and the Unitarians sent choirs. At the conclusion of the concert, everyone sang "May the Lord Bless You and Keep You" and the Seven-Fold Amen. Choir members were delighted to see supportive faces in the audience including Becca Zwerling, Vic Appel, Jaime Hadley, David Ross, Steve Domingue, and others. Our little church filled up two pews plus. Nodie was so proud of the great music and all of the support our little church showed.

Nodie is also delighted to have a number of **new choir members**. Hannah Norton, Laura McOsker, Sarah Gourlie, Amy Harris, Zoe Castro, Don Miles are adding their voices to our fine choir. On the second Sunday of October Aaron Carter-Cohn, Andy Streitmeier, and Robin Rosson learned the music in a few days to accompany marvelous baritone Leland Morine. Aaron put together

a trio arrangement to accompany Leland as he sang two numbers for the service. He has sung with many West Coast groups and he complimented the trio on their fine work with him. It was really nice that Aaron's mom and grandpa were there to hear the special music, too.

You may be asking "Who is **Leland Morine** and why is he singing at our church?" Google him and you will find out that he is a wonderful baritone, but the reason he was at our church is that he is **Linda Bulkeley Morine's** new husband. Linda was a member here from 1985-87 and has been in California since then. They were in town because Linda had been to Gainesville, TX, to see about some family property and they decided to come to Austin for some fun. John and Lois Drachenberg were delighted to introduce Leland to everyone as he was a good friend of theirs back in Oakland at their UCC church, and John performed Linda and Leland's wedding in Oakland on Aug. 19. Linda continues to work in environmental planning and remembers running into Carol Barrett at a number of meetings when Carol was the city manager in Berkeley, CA.

Congratulations to **Hannah Norton** who has just been accepted into the UT School of Information master's program. She will start classes in January. Hannah is working as an administrative assistant at the Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the UT Law School. She is from Philadelphia and recently lived in Northfield, Minnesota where she went to Carleton College as an undergrad.

In September, **Paul and Ellen Deisler** made two trips, almost back to back, to Houston, TX, and to Santa Fe, NM. They went to Houston over a weekend to attend a goodbye party for a very longtime and dear friend who is moving from a retirement community there to one in Louisville, Kentucky, where she will be near family. It is a good and sensible move but, for Paul and Ellen and many others, a sad one since they probably will not see her again. The affair was held at the Memorial Drive Lutheran Church in Houston, complete with harpist and refreshments and, in particular, many old friends. They were home for a day to repack, and then Paul and Ellen drove off toward Santa Fe with intermediate stops in Odessa and Lubbock. The first stop was to visit Paul's one remaining aunt, his mother's youngest sister, and the second to visit Paul's college roommate and his wife. Both visits were wonderful with time for catching up and reminiscing. On the way to Santa Fe, Paul and Ellen were assailed by very high winds and dust storms reminiscent of the dust storms of the '30s. When they arrived in Santa Fe, the weather was extremely cold and it was raining. The mountains around the city were covered with snow. It cleared up the next day and Paul and Ellen had a fine visit with their younger daughter, Julie. Julie, who teaches at Santa Fe Community College, was in a great frame of mind having received a promotion and a raise. The trip home was uneventful and pleasant with lunch at the Altdorf in Fredericksburg shortly before hitting Austin and its traffic.

Continuing in the fine music tradition of our church, fourteen-year-old **Travis Moore**, an 8th grader at O. Henry, is part of a new band on the Austin music scene. "The Friday Nights" have a CD out entitled "Live at Hamid's" (Hamid is a soccer buddy Travis' dad John). Travis is playing lead and rhythm

guitar. The other 4 members are at Austin High. In mid-October they were busy writing some of their own songs and were preparing for a studio recording session. John says that the group is a true rock and roll band with music along the lines of Led Zeppelin. They played a recent gig at Lamar Fest at Lamar Middle School. Travis' sister Sarah is a senior at Garza Independence High School and is busy working on college applications. The Bradford-Moore household stays busy with Suzanne doing a lot of traveling for her job (MGT of America). Recently, 9 employees of the company, including Suzanne, worked on a Hands on Housing project in Austin. Suzanne's niece Lauren Krakauskas (who spent her senior year of high school living with John and Suzanne) is enjoying a marvelous sophomore college year at Lorenzo di Medici University in Florence, Italy. Suzanne and Sarah are trying to find time to go and visit while Lauren is there.

Jake Burlinson is now a senior at Texas State University! He has switched his emphasis from the military police program in the Army Reserve to the National Guard medical unit. He wants to be a medivac helicopter pilot, but has to go through a great deal of training before getting to that point.

Eunice Paul reports that she celebrated her 85th birthday recently. Happy belated good wishes, Eunice. She also gently pointed out that ye editor had erred in calling Nathaniel Tapley Nathaniel Paul--oops. Sorry, Nathaniel.

Liz and Bill Spencer had a great week in Myrtle Beach, SC, with Bill's mom who lives in Virginia and her gentleman friend. They enjoyed wonderful beaches, great weather, and a beautiful aquarium while they were there.

Ellie Nash took a quick trip in October for a weekend to visit a lifelong friend who is at NYU. It was her first foray into NY without family. She managed to get the bus in from the airport and subway downtown. They had a great time seeing "Hairspray" and wandering around SoHo. **Annie** has turned into a film buff and has started, on her own, a film club at The Khabele School. She has ambitions to be a director, and everything to do with film is turning out to be a passion for her. **Becky** is dancing several nights and afternoons each week. Saturdays are devoted to rehearsals for the Austin Children's Nutcracker, to be held at the Dougherty Theater, Dec. 8-10 and 15-17. Interested in a good, inexpensive, child-friendly Nutcracker? Contact the Nashes to find out how to get tickets. **Liz** has started working part-time as the Associate Conference Minister for the Brazos Association. Otherwise, Liz and Reuel can't remember what they are doing ...

On October 5, **Rizer Everett's** daughter, Dot, arrived by plane in Austin from Albuquerque, NM. The following day they drove to Houston and registered at the Windsor Suites for the reunion of the former employees and their family members of the Standard Vacuum Oil Co. Rizer's son, John, arrived in Houston on a business trip, and the three of them had good visits with friends who attend the Stan-Vac reunions every two years. At the Indonesian Dinner on Saturday night, special plaques were presented to several attendees "In appreciation for their dedicated service to the StanVac Reunion." Crowns and robes were presented to Marilyn Glanton as queen and to Rizer as king for the meeting. The reunions are always enjoyable, but there is also the sadness of learning about

members who were unable to attend the reunion because of poor health. The Fall term of the LAMP (Learning Activities for Mature People) Organization began on 3 October and will end on 9 November. Rizer reports that the curriculum of subjects for the session looks as interesting as the subjects for past years have been.

Steven and Jeanine Neuse are back home in Arkansas...back from a month in Germany visiting their son Micah and his family. What fun it was for them to participate in grandchildren's activities...school events, soccer games, birthdays, creative play time, etc! Of course, they enjoyed their parents also, took a few day trips, and a three day trip to Strasbourg. From Oct. 14 - 22, the Washington County League of Women Voters sponsored the visit of five Ukrainians through the Open World Program. Their agenda was jam-packed with activities. Steven and Jeanine accompanied them to various events, hosted them for an evening meal, and transported them periodically in a rented van. It was an interesting experience. The last weekend in Oct. they helped host the Arkansas Chapter of Partners of Americas - East Bolivia here in Fayetteville. Steven is the president of the chapter so he has been helping plan it and we hosted a reception on Friday, Oct. 27th.

Marilyn Gaddis and George Carruthers stepped aboard Amtrak in San Marcos on September 20th for a 30 day odyssey. Their first stop was Tulsa, spending several days with Air Force friends. On to Kansas City on an overnight bus with an early morning Amtrak connection to Independence, MO. They discovered that the Harry Truman Train Station was no longer in use! They trudged up the hill to the Reorganized LDS facility and found a phone where they were able to call a cab to take them to their motel. It was early, but the motel had a vacant room and invited them to eat breakfast before taking a shower and a nap. In the afternoon, they found the room for their Elderhostel orientation and discovered that their Oregon Trail leader was the same one who had led them on their Lewis and Clark trip. In the morning, they joined 25 others on a bus trek to see what nearly 400,000 pioneers had experienced as they made their way from the Missouri River to the Wilamette Valley in Oregon. They walked the ruts, climbed up ridges, looked down the cliffs where wagons were hauled up and down, walked through sod houses, rode in covered wagons, ate buffalo stew, visited forts, saw pioneer's signatures on rocks, stopped at historic interpretive centers, crossed the Continental Divide, walked down to river crossings, found the junction where the California and Utah Trails separated, and ended their fascinating journey at Oregon City, Oregon. Marilyn's cousins met them in Portland and took them to the Evergreen Air Museum to see the Spruce Goose in her new home and other historic aircraft on their way to Eugene. While in Eugene, cousins on both sides of Marilyn's family had a reunion. Back on Amtrak with stops in Chico, CA, and Los Angeles to visit Marilyn's family, they flew back to Austin after an inspirational trip. At the end of September, Marilyn flew to California to celebrate her 60th high school reunion in Santa Maria. The first week in October found Marilyn in Madison, WI, for her UW-Madison School of Education Board of Visitors meetings.

Jennifer Howicz thanks everyone who participated in the ACC Physical Therapist Assistant Program fund-raiser. They raised almost \$1,000 with the raffle! Unfortunately, no one from CCA won a prize (including Jennifer!), but one of her neighbors won the free landscaping consultation from Nancy Edison's business "Landscape and Love It." Thanks again! Jim and Jennifer found out late last month that 5th grader Emily was to read her Rising Star poem entitled "Tess" at a Poetry Slam at the Texas Book Festival in Austin at the end of the October. Here is Emily's poem.

Tess

Tess's golden, blond hair shines like the shimmering sun in the early afternoon.

I cradle the infant gently in my soft, smooth hands.

Cautiously I tickle Tess on her delicate stomach.

My sister gurgles, her beautiful laugh like a bird singing in the summer.

I give Tess her bottle.

The baby slurps the milk as if she is licking a lollipop.

Tess slowly drifts into a deep sleep.

In her rest Tess smiles at me.

I am filled with joy that Tess is my sister.

She is Tess with the golden, blond hair."

Three-year-old Tess is doing well in her preschool class, and loves counting and numbers. In fact, she loves counting so much that Jim and Jennifer are having trouble teaching her to read - whenever she sees the alphabet or a word, she just wants to count the letters.

Mary and Matt Blackstock had a good time in southern Utah, at Zion Park, Bryce Canyon, and the north rim of the Grand Canyon. For Matt, Bryce was the more spectacular, with intensely bright colors, almost luminescent. He was impressed that the stone structures continually evolve, how he doesn't know. Along with nature's show, they also had an education in Mormon culture and history, the leaders of the tour being of that faith; impressive people. In sum, it was a concentrated week that also involved introductions to many intriguing older people. Matt notes that it's also nice that you don't have to explain things to elderly people!

Lisa Kirch reports, "Not much news from here (Florence, Alabama), unless it's that Indian summer is not a bad thing. They haven't started trying to freeze us quite yet. Also, Sarah 'hates' Alaska: 'Why does it have to be bigger than Texas?' You can see that, even after a year, she's still a proper Texan. As for me, I'm in that part of the semester where you wish it could all just be over. Way too much grading, and other deadlines hanging over me."

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Tommie Pinkard
- 3 Stella Morrison
- 4 Nannette Strickland
- 5 Mary Blackstock
- 7 Ann Hubbs

Tom VandeStadt
8 Setsuko Kaneda
Maggie Taylor
9 Craig Barrett
Bree Hawes-Domingue
12 Michael Adams
Gabriel Pinkard
Harrison Vee Tucker
16 Brian Prioleau
Norma Hawes
17 Dennis Murphy
18 Jennifer Bratton
Jacob Bardati
22 Mariah Newell
23 Kathleen Strong
Terri Ocean
24 Jim Howicz
27 Tess Howicz
30 Betty Bodman

FRIENDSHIP SUPPERS

The idea of Friendship Suppers has been presented to the Board of Deacons as a great way for us to get to know each other better. The suppers will give you a chance to talk to other members of the congregation while sharing good food and fellowship in a setting other than the church since they will be hosted in people's homes.

- The primary purpose is to build community and friendship
- All adults are welcome to participate – members, non-members, young, old, single, married
- We ask you to commit to attending as many as four dinners over the course of the year, one of which you could host in your home if you wish
- If you don't think you can manage to host a dinner alone, we'll help you find a co-host
- Hosts would provide (besides their home) a main course and would assign others to bring appetizers, salads, etc.
- The groups of 6-10 people will change for each dinner
- You don't need a "house beautiful" to participate – or even an "apartment beautiful"; informal works for many of us
- If you don't drive, we'll help you find a ride

The dates for the dinners will be:

November 4 December 2
January 20 March 10

There are sign-up sheets on a clip-board in the Fellowship Hall.

CHURCH SAFETY POLICY IN THE MAKING

At our last Christian Education Board meeting, we adopted a Safety Policy for children's and youth activities that will be brought before the Coordinating Council. This policy, which Jennifer Howicz and Robin Chapman have put long hours into putting together, generally will require a larger volunteer effort with our kids to ensure that enough adults are with them during Sunday School, in the nursery, and during other activities. We will be sharing it with the church soon. It is also part of a more comprehensive Church Safety Policy dealing with sexual harassment and similar issues that the Coordinating Council will be considering at its next meeting. Our church's insurance policy is requiring that we have such a policy that we carefully follow in order to continue our insurance coverage for abuse situations – and, of course, we need to take steps to be sure we care for those who are part of our church. More news will come to the congregation as we make progress on this policy.

Liz Nash, Sunday School Superintendent

COFFEE HOUR

Please sign up in the Fellowship Room to be coffee hour hosts on an upcoming Sunday. The coffee hour time is such a good opportunity to visit old friends and meet visitors. We keep coffee and ginger ale and some punch fixings in the pantry in the kitchen. There are usually paper napkins, and we use coffee mugs and punch cups to avoid wasting natural resources. Your menu can be as simple or complicated as you want. Cookies and/or chips and salsa are just fine! If you have questions, talk to Pat Oakes, Tommie Pinkard, or Lynne Lemley.

LANDSCAPING

Fall is one of the best times to plan or plant your yard. As an avid gardener, lover of the beauty of nature, conservationist, and do-it-yourselfer, I totally enjoy taking the desires and needs of a homeowner and translating them into a plan that will enable those in that home to enjoy their outdoor surroundings. "Landscape and Love It" is the name of my landscape design company and if you or anyone you know could use my expertise, call Nancy Edison at 524-5272. I'd love to help!

Deadline for December VISITOR — November 17