

THE VISITOR

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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Rev. Amelia Fulbright



“Stories From Childhood”

Rev. Amelia Fulbright

with artwork by Stephen Sawyer

Last Sunday we began a new worship series entitled, “Stories From Childhood,” where all of our Sunday readings will focus on children as the primary characters. But this is not a series just about children or just for children, it is an opportunity for all of us to consider childhood, both our own and the lives of the children we know, as a locus of God’s grace and source of true wisdom.

In addition to the sacred stories we’ll consider each week, I’m inviting church members to consider telling a brief story---worship gift style, about 5 minutes or less, about something from their own childhoods. If you’re interested in telling a story, take a look at the themes and sacred texts for each week below, and see if there is a biblical story that might find resonance with your personal story. ***Then you can sign up to tell your story at the following link. The link also allows folks to sign up to read the scripture and words for***

for centering for each week, which you also are invited to do, even if you don't wish to share a story.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1RWHqebXRlbHrzTh57Qb9ZSdDtYrghwvbnUUrGN9I6Fp0/edit>

Some questions to consider when telling your story:

- 1) Who are the main characters in the story?
- 2) What is the main event, question, or problem at the heart of the story?
- 3) Is there a moral, insight, or takeaway that you got from the story, both as a child and now in the re-telling?

10/3: “As a Little Child,” Mark 10:13-16 (Jesus welcomes the little children.)

What does Jesus mean when he warns, “Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:15)?

10/10: “Sibling Bravery,” Exodus 2:1-10 (Miriam & Moses in the reeds)

What can we learn from Miriam about courage and the hunger for liberation?

10/17: “The Prophetic Child,” 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1 (Samuel’s call from God)

We often hear about the “problem child” or the “gifted child,” but what can Samuel’s story teach us about “the prophetic child” and the role our children play in speaking truth to power?

10/24: “Unlikely Heroes, Uncommon Tools,” 1 Samuel 17 (David triumphs over Goliath)

What does David’s story convey to us about the creativity and perspective that comes with youth?

10/31: “Out of the Mouths of Babes,” Luke 2:39-52 with excerpts from *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*

(Young Jesus coming to terms with his own power and wisdom)

What can we learn from the particular power and wisdom of childhood, and how can grownups learn to nurture the wisdom of the youth in their midst?

11/7: “Misdiagnosis,” Mark 9:14-32 (The boy with an “evil spirit”)

What can we learn from paying closer attention to the pain and struggles of children?

11/14: A childhood story from the sacred scriptures of Islam --- speaker TBD

11/21: “The Mysterious Young Man in White,” Mark 14:43-52 and Mark 16:1-8

What can adolescence teach us about shame & restoration, alienation & redemption?

November Visitor Deadline October 22, 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
October
by Liz Nash

Our Heart of Texas Fall Meeting will be held virtually on Saturday, October 23rd at 10 am, hosted by the Austin cluster of churches. We had, of course, hoped finally to have an in-person meeting, but Austin is still in the Stage 5 COVID risk level as I write, and we don't want to put people at risk by gathering in person. Let's hope and pray the illness level decreases soon! I am thankful, though, that we are able to meet via Zoom. The meeting information and link will be sent out in early October.

One item on the agenda will be our continuing work to join the South Central Conference Unified Fitness Review Committee. As I have written in the past, fitness reviews are conducted by our Committee on Ministry when a complaint is brought against one of our ministers that raises questions about that minister's fitness for continued ministry, based on the set of ethical standards set forth in the United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry that all of our ministers are charged to follow. These reviews, which have not occurred often, are challenging and require quite a bit of work. The proposal is to have one committee in the South Central Conference comprised of people from all of the Associations to conduct them, allowing the members to be trained, gain experience, and do the work in a consistent way. Our Committee on Ministry has done research and found that this model has worked well in other Conferences. However, the process of joining the Unified Committee involves our whole Association since we will have to change our bylaws and nominate members. We will continue with that process at our Fall and Spring Association meetings.

Eric Gates, Pastor of Faith UCC in Bryan, is nearing the end of the process of gaining Ordained Ministerial Partner standing in the United Church of Christ. **Eric** is a Christian Church/Disciples of Christ (DOC) minister. Once this process is completed, **Eric** will be fully a UCC minister while serving a UCC church, but can go back to serve DOC churches as a full DOC minister later on. Before entering the ministry, **Eric** served our country for eight years in the Marine Corps and then served the Austin community as an Austin Police officer for nine years. In addition to being Pastor at Faith, **Eric** is the founder

and CEO of Devil Dog Coffee Company in Buda. We welcome **Eric** as a ministry colleague. I hope many of us will get a chance to enjoy a cup of coffee with him!

Finally, I want to say to each of you in our churches that it has been a great privilege and joy to serve among you as your Association Minister. Since I began this work in 2006, I have met and worked with so many of you that are real servants of Christ. We have had a group of fine and dedicated ministers - I could not have asked for a better group to serve with. Although I will have to step back from being among you as I retire in October, I treasure the friendships and feel enormously blessed by working in ministry among you. I know you will welcome my successor as you have always so warmly welcomed me. Thank you for our years together.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Personals by Pat Oakes

John Goff and Gail Christeson celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on board the Wilderness Adventure in Alaska along with about 40 other passengers. Each day they got to choose from activities like kayaking, skiff tours, and hiking, and got to see several glaciers and lots of wildlife.



9/21 John Goff and Gail Christeson had a marvelous time kayaking in Glacier Bay on their recent trip to Alaska

ship last Friday, the 10th, and was assermenté (sworn in) on the 15th as a lawyer for the Province of Québec. On the 16th, he started lawyering for Criminal Legal Aid. **Vivi** and **Ellie** couldn't be more proud! Last but not least, they'll be welcoming Bébé Boy at Christmastime! **Vivi** is already embracing the role of Grande Soeur (Big Sis), and we're so excited about life as a family of four.



9/21 Louis Rodgers and Ellie Nash with their jumping for joy daughter Vivi in front of their new home in Montreal



9/21 John and Gail very much enjoyed their smaller ship, the Wilderness Adventure with only about 40 passengers

Ellie Nash and her husband **Louis Rodgers** and daughter **Vivi** are jumping for joy because they have so many adventures happening in their lives: they just moved to the Petite Patrie neighborhood of Montreal, where they are discovering their ruelle (alley) community and all of the neat things that come with urban family life. They are missing leafy Outremont and their friends there, but so happy to be settling into their new life in Petite Patrie. **Louis** finished his super intense six-month articling intern-



9/15/21 Louis' colleagues honored the end of his internship with a great 5 à 7 (happy hour) at the park - see his RBG-style jabot collar around his neck!

Personals by Pat Oakes

Ann Locasio wants us to know that she is excited about an event upcoming in October. She will be a contestant in the 44th O. Henry Pun-Off World Championships on October 23. She is competing for "Punniest of Show." Not everyone may have heard the gnus about this. It's Jest for a Wordy Cause! **Ann** says, "Seriously, with all the grim news around us now, maybe a little fun is a good thing and will lift some spirits. Hope so." The Pun-Off folks are hoping to return to a live format in 2022, but for now it will be a virtual event. Don't forget to tune in. Here is the link. <https://www.punoff.com>

The peripatetic **Hernandez-Geer** family has this report from **Jonathan Geer** "Yes, we've had a lot happening since our last update in the Personals. We took a 10 day trip to Alaska at the end of August which was an incredible experience. We had originally planned to go with our entire family in 2020, but the pandemic upended things so this year it was just me, **Roberto**, **Xitlali**, and **Tish** (**Jonathan's** mom). We saw quite a bit of wildlife including multiple moose and caribou, sea lions and puffins and we took a 6 hour cruise through the Kenai Fjords to see the Aialik Glacier. Our three days in Denali were unfortunately incredibly cloudy and drizzly (as was most of the trip) so we never got a good view of the peak. The drives along Richardson Hwy and Hwy 1 were gorgeous and we did have some good sun then. We also hiked to an ice cave for the first time, which was really stunning! We didn't really go deep into it since they are such unstable environments, but it was a wonder to behold! Less than a week after we returned from Alaska we had family from Mexico in town for two big events: **Xitlali's** baptism and our niece **Dayanara's** Sweet Sixteen celebration (or Quince + 1 if you will). (note—both **Dayanara** and her brother **Edgar** have sung in our church choir with their cousin **Roberto** — when we were still worshipping in the sanctuary) It was wonderful to finally be able to baptize **Xitlali** and I have to give **Amelia** praise for going with the flow since **Lali** is definitely a full blown toddler now with quite a mind of her own! **Roberto's** sister, **Ana**, stayed an extra week to spend more time with **Xitlali**, too." The baptism service was included in the Sunday service the next day and everyone enjoyed watching **Xitlali** trying to put her hands into the oh-so-tempting bowl of water.



8/23/21 Roberto, Xitlali, Jonathan Geer and Tish at Virgin Creek Falls Trail in Girdwood, AK



8/28/21 Inside the Castner Glacier Ice Cave (for just a few minutes we promise!!)



9/4/21 L to R Guillermo (brother), Ery (sister-in-law), Memo (nephew), Abril (niece), Xitlali and Jonathan, Amelia, Roberto, Ana (sister)

Photos cont. on the next page

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



9/5/21 Dayanara's Sweet Sixteen celebration
(or Quince + 1 if you will)

Ruth Koenig shares, "My son and daughter-in-law who live here in Austin spent time visiting cousins in Germany and then flew to meet friends in Croatia, which they found to be amazingly beautiful. (I had not been aware of Croatia as a vacation destination, but they are sold) These same friends joined them for a sailing trip back to Austin. My Ohio son flew here to keep Mom company while my Austin family were gone, which I much appreciated. They had a wonderful trip!"

Betty Phillips reports that she and daughters **Katy** and **Stephanie** are beginning to do better after **Bill's** death in July. **Betty** is back in physical therapy (2 times a week plus working on her own daily) working on regaining leg strength and is seeing results. **Stephanie's** partner **Kathy** has completed her radiation treatments and has a brief hiatus before starting heavy duty chemo.

Barbara Burnham says, "Over the summer I taught my older granddaughter, **Samantha Rosson** (now 10), how to sew. She made a drawstring bag with a denim bottom, floral printed top, and solid green lining. She says she will use it to store her "fidgets." Next we will make a pencil case with a fancy zipper. That pattern was given to me by a friend in the Project Linus group, which is again meeting monthly (with masks). **Sammy** made a lot of progress on her sewing and was very proud to have created something so cute! She and her sister **Rebecca** are still attending online classes this fall."

Folks who were enjoying visiting the Zoom service for church on Sunday, September 5, were

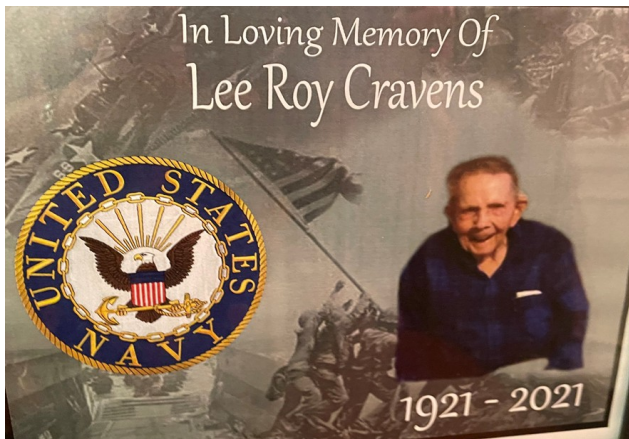
pleased to see the **Nash** family who were online from their home in the Berkshires. They were even more delighted when daughter **Annie** announced to one and all that **Sooner Dawsen**, her longtime boyfriend, had proposed the day before and **Annie** said yes! **Sooner** joined the **Nashes** and said hello to everyone. **Annie** and **Sooner**, who met 11 years ago at Naropa University in Boulder, CO, and have been together for 10 years, live in Manchester, VT, where **Annie** works for Northshire Living doing remodeling design and **Sooner** works in solar panel sales and design and is also a fly fishing guide. **Annie** remembers with a smile that her high school Sunday school teacher, **Mel Oakes**, advised students in his class not to marry until they were 30 (she is 31)—and to be sure that the one they chose to marry should not just love them but also admire them—and **Sooner** definitely does admire **Annie**.



7/21 Annie Nash and Sooner Dawsen in Salida, CO, for the wedding of her college roommate

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

Our wonderful office administrator **Donna Cravens** is mourning the loss of her beloved dad, 99 years old **Lee Roy Cravens**, in Shepherdsville, KY. **Donna**, who has made the drive many times, did so again with her dog Sandy who kept her company. She joined siblings there for the funeral. He was a chief petty officer in the Navy during WWII and also a 32nd degree Mason. **Donna** says that he loved everything mechanical and could fix anything. He became the superintendent of the Jefferson County, KY, schools maintenance department. After he retired he loved helping her Mother with her large garden and tinkering on anything a neighbor brought over that needed welding or some other type of repair. As a veteran he was given a full military funeral with an escort to the cemetery.



9-23-21 Presented by his military honor guard for his funeral, he was 3 months shy to the day of becoming 100 years old



8-27-21 One of the last pictures made by one of his many caregivers and sent to me for my birthday. He still had those big ears, we all teased him about.

The remarkable **Eunice Paul** celebrated her 100th birthday on Tuesday, Sept. 28th. **Eunice** and her husband **Bob Paul** were members of the church from 1977-1987. They went back to England then and enjoyed their place in Leatherhead, Surrey. **Bob** died in 1992 and **Eunice** is still in their home, living on her own. Daughter **Lydia** lives about ten miles away and checks in on **Eunice** several times a week.



Be sure and tune in next month for the saga of the great Maine sailing trip made by some of our members. Here is a preview.

5/24/1987 Eunice and Bob Paul with their daughter Lydia Tapley



9/14/21 Reuel Nash, Whit Bodman, Liz Nash, and Beth Gleason's friend Mary off the coast of Maine

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

Lynn Lemley is enjoying having her mom (**Kathryn W. Robert**—a.k.a. **Kathy** in town. She recently moved from Lubbock and is now living at Buckner Villas in northeast Austin. **Lynne** has been visiting her mom at Sunday mornings and she has been enjoying the Zoom service and the visiting afterwards. In other **Lemley** news, her daughter-in-law **Rachelle** entered an event at the strongman/woman contest sponsored by the gym Salado Fitness in Salado. There were about 20 men and 3 women competing and **Rachelle** won the women's division. It was her first strongwoman competition which she entered as a novice. Now she is no longer a novice! **Rachelle**, with her **Jeffrey**, **Josette** and the senior **Lemley** cheering her on, lifted 230 pounds from a dead lift 16 times in one minute.

gets underway. He became the chair of the department of human development and family services in 2016.



9/21 Rachelle Lemley weightlifting at a competition in Salado



9/21 Betsy and Rollin Russell with Betsy's cousin Judy who was the maid of honor at Betsy and Rollin's wedding 60 years ago.

Stephen Russell reports that he and husband **Scott Neely** had a great time at his parents' 60th wedding anniversary small family celebration in early September in Asheville, NC. The **Russell** family were members at the church here in Austin for many, many years. His mom **Betsy** still struggles with Parkinson's, but fortunately his dad **Rollin** is still doing very well and is a wonderful helpmate for **Betsy**. Now he is back to work as the UT school year