

THE VISITOR

September 2019

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

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Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt



Many years ago, our spiritual ancestors imagined a land of milk and honey, then a new creation, then a New Jerusalem. This ideal land of justice and peace didn't exist anywhere on earth except the shared imagination of our ancestors. Yet the dream held them together as a people through numerous trials and tribulations. And throughout history, this imagined earthly paradise has inspired and empowered countless people to exert enormous energy and make untold sacrifices in pursuit of this dream.

Like our spiritual ancestors, we too imagine a world that's just and peaceful, a world that's healthy and whole. This just and peaceful world, this ideal world that's healthy and whole, doesn't exist anywhere on earth except the human imagination. But it's only because we humans have the capacity to imagine a just and peaceful existence on earth that we can become more just and peaceful in actual practice. It's only because someone can stand up and proclaim, "I have a dream," that those of us who share that dream can actually work and struggle to change the world for the better.

Our imaginations play a powerful role in our spirituality, and in our capacity to bring about change in our personal lives, our communities, our institutions, and our world. Our imaginations contribute to our vision of reality, and when we undergo a conversion of the imagination, we can work to convert our current reality by making real what we envision. Collective bodies of people—a culture, a neighborhood, or the little church on the corner—can renew and recreate themselves by undergoing conversions of the imagination.

Several years ago, a few people imagined a new West Campus neighborhood. This new creation is now becoming a tangible reality all around us. What do we imagine our church's future being in this new neighborhood that's springing up all around us? What kind of new opportunities and possibilities can we imagine for our church in the future in this new neighborhood? What new forms could our church take to be relevant—to be of service, to be needed, to be a Christ-like presence—in this new neighborhood?

I believe the Holy Spirit works most powerfully through the human imagination. When people, young and old, open their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit, they dream dreams and envision new realities. These dreams and visions can hold communities together for centuries, through all kinds of trials and tribulations. These dreams and visions can inspire, embolden, and empower people to work for the new reality they imagine. They can propel people forward into a better future.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the future of our church is being born in our imaginations today. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can act on our inspiration in bold and powerful ways to renew and recreate ourselves.

So what do you imagine? This is the question that we will be exploring far more deeply in the weeks and months ahead. When you open your heart and mind to the Holy Spirit, what do you imagine? What is the ideal form our church could take to serve our neighborhood, city, and world?

Tom

October Visitor Deadline September 25, 2019

Church Leadership

Deacons Chair	Barbara Burnham
Outreach Team	Whit Bodman
Moderator	John Goff
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Dennis Murphy
Christian Education Coordinators	Bethany Leach
Youth Sunday School	Amy Kent Rivera
Clerk	Jaime Hadley
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmaster	Mel Oakes
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

Heart of Texas Association News
September
by Liz Nash

Our Association Executive Committee asked me to write this month about what this group does, who is included on it, and when we meet. We want as many people in our churches as possible to know how to be part of the work and connection among our churches in our Association. We have several churches that participate actively and several that we only see occasionally. We are here for everyone, and we want to be sure all of our churches know how to join our Association life.

Our Executive Committee meets quarterly on Saturdays for about two and a half hours, usually starting either at 10 am or 11 am, depending on where we meet. **Each church is invited to send a voting representative to these meetings**, and is entitled to do so according to our bylaws. We often rotate our meeting places to try to minimize the driving distance for our regular attenders. Recent meeting places have included Weimar UCC, St. Peter's Church of Coupland, Faith UCC in New Braunfels, and JW's Steakhouse in Carmine (between Giddings and Burton). Our Executive Committee sets the agenda for and plans the Fall and Spring Association Meetings, nominates people to serve on the Heart of Texas Association Committee on Ministry (which oversees our ministers, members in discernment for ministry, and church standing), nominates Association officers, nominates people to serve on our seminary and licensed ministry scholarship committee, makes budget decisions, coordinates the planning committee when it is our turn to host the South Central Conference Annual Meeting, stays as up to date as possible with the life of our churches, and tries to respond when churches ask in some way for our help. Plus, we enjoy being together, getting to know each other, and sharing about the ministry of our churches. Our budget decisions typically include the regular work of putting together an annual budget and overseeing spending.

We also decide how to distribute youth scholarships for the UCC National Youth Event, fund scholarships for seminarians and those in licensed ministry training, fund psychological/spirituality testing for those preparing for ministry, and respond to other needs as these come up with the funds we have available. Our current officers are **Linda Coates**, Moderator; **Carl Schwartz-King**, Vice-Moderator; **Joe Ward**, Treasurer; and **Arlene Turner**, Secretary. If your church would like to designate a representative to the Executive Committee and/or find out when and where the upcoming meetings will be, get in touch with **Linda Coats** at linda_coats@msn.com or with me at lizknash@gmail.com, and we will add the contact you give us to our email list for meeting information.

Of course, all are invited to our **Heart of Texas Fall Association Meeting, to be held on Saturday, November 16th at Trinity Church of Austin at 11 am**. The meeting and lunch will be hosted by Congregational Church of Austin and Trinity. We anticipate having at least one Ecclesiastical Council for a candidate for ministry seeking ordination. Come join us as we make important decisions about ministry in this Council, as we connect and build community among our churches, as we do our Association business together, and as we seek to respond to the needs and ideas of our churches.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Personals by Pat Oakes

Various members of our congregation continued to enrich our Sunday worship experience through the gifts they presented to us in July. **Joy Penticuff** dazzled us again with her love of poetry and her incredible ability to memorize texts and convey them with enthusiasm and meaning. Her selection this time was "Journey Toward Wholeness" by **Frederick Buechner**, which encouraged us to experience the world as holy and thus to become whole. Next **Nodie Murphy**, our music director, gave herself a gift by realizing a longtime dream. She focused on two aspects of hymn writing: how one collection of words can be set to a variety of tunes, and how one tune can inspire multiple poets to provide beautiful words and create various emotions. Then **Warinda Harris** blessed us with an introduction to her wonderful grandfather, **James DeBlanc**, who continues to inspire and guide her in her practical, moral, and spiritual life ten years after his passing. After worship, she shared some further memorabilia with us in the fellowship hall.

Last month **Tom** wrote about climbing Blanca Peak (elevation 14,345') with **Pam Tucker**. **Pam** elaborates on **Tom's** story by noting it is an incredibly beautiful and challenging peak to climb. There are five or so lakes above timberline that have amazing colors of greens and blues. One of them was still about 1/3 covered in ice/snow. There are also two waterfalls above timberline. Even in late July, they had to walk over several snow fields above timberline. **Pam** really enjoyed hiking with **Tom**. This hike is physically very challenging because of the altitude and the elevation change, so it is a somewhat solitary journey because there is not much energy for talking and a lot of mental focus on the experience and effort. When **Tom** started the ascent, he did not stop. He set a pace that he just kept on going and going. **Pam** hikes a mountain at a slightly faster pace, but stops regularly to catch her breath. This probably reflects their different ways to work out: **Tom** goes on long, hard bike rides and **Pam** works on 20 - 30 minute intense aerobic workouts. Overall, this made their ascent about the same speed which worked nicely. Neither had to wait for the other and neither had to hurry. The hike started about 10,000 feet elevation, was about 12 - 13 miles

round trip and took them eight hours to complete, excluding the slow and turbulent jeep ride. It was a great day!



7/26/19 Pam Tucker and Tom VandeStadt climbed Blanca Peak, the 4th highest peak in the Rockies and in Colorado

Carol and John Burlinson are delighted to announce the marriage of their son **Jake** to **Jackie Kirby**. They were married on August 3, 2019, at Vintage Villas overlooking Lake Travis. John had spent a week in the hospital on IV antibiotics for cellulitis, and his doctor wasn't super enthused about releasing him a day before the wedding. But, since it was such a special event, she did anyway. The wedding turned out great, and the couple will be honeymooning in November (place to be determined). **John** is getting home health care and improving. **Carol and John** are so glad to welcome into the family **Jackie's** three children--**Jade**, 10, **CJ**, 13, and **Haley**, 15. **Jake** and **Jackie** live in Buda; the kids live with their dad in **Kyle** where they'll attend school.



8/3/19 Jake and Jackie Burlinson at their wedding reception

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

Carolyn Thompson had a lovely visit with her granddaughter, **Emily** (daughter of her daughter **Catherine**), in late July. **Carolyn** says, "I think she enjoyed reading on the porch at the farm and on my balcony here in Austin as much as anything else we did. Fortunately it was the week we had some cooler weather." Their apartment in **Boston** has no outdoor space. Besides indulging in barbecue and Mexican food they took a tour of the King Ranch in south Texas. They learned that the color of the Santa Gertrudis cattle (dark reddish brown) protects them from sunburn and is a deterrent to insects. Before **Richard King** became a rancher he had been a successful riverboat captain who amassed the money he used to put together the King Ranch in the 1850's. After he died, his widow, **Henrietta King**, continued to manage the ranch for the next forty years.



Carolyn Thompson's granddaughter Emily soaking up some summer ambience in Austin

Savanna Tucker had an incredible time in Europe visiting Scotland, England, France, Germany, Austria and Croatia. She went with her best friend, **Daryl** and **Daryl's** family, although she flew to Scotland and from Croatia by herself. She came home just in time to participate in the Ultimate Frisbee national tournament in Blaine, MN, in early August. Their team came in 7th for the Girls Under 20 division. Most of the players are from Austin, but there are some from Dallas and Houston as well. Her mom **Pam** did not fly herself (in her own plane) to Minnesota. She considered it seriously because it would be an easy flight and there was a little airport less than a mile from the fields. But she wanted to be certain she could go. There is nothing certain about weather, so she got the cheap seats on

Frontier with only an under-the-seat carry on. It cost less than the gas to fly her plane. She did fly to CO and back, but she needs to fly more often for practice.



7/19 Savanna Tucker at a blue cave in Croatia wearing a Longhorn T-shirt!



7/19 Savanna Tucker and her best friend Daryl at the Arc de triomphe in Paris

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

Congratulations to **Don Miles** who is now a great-grandfather for the third time and his son **Richard** and his wife **Phoebe** are now first-time grandparents. **Richard** and **Phoebe** sat in with our choir on a couple of occasions a few years ago. The little girl, named **Caroline**, was born to **Richard** and **Phoebe's** older daughter **Cecelia** and her husband **Fred Hubach**. Baby **Caroline** and her parents live in NW Washington, DC. Mom **Cecelia Hubach** is an executive with Geico Insurance, and dad **Fred** is a financial advisor. The grandparents, **Richard** and **Phoebe**, live within walking distance. Both couples have been visiting back and forth. **Don** has provided a couple of small details-- The neighborhood is near the line with Chevy Chase, MD, and includes Ping Pong Pizza, the restaurant in the "Pizzagate" story. **Fred's** parents, the "other" grandparents are named **Fred** and **Wilma**, as in the Flintstones!). The upcoming 4th great grandchild will be the second (the first one is **Molly**) for **Garrett** and **Tiffany Ritzman**. **Garrett** is working on his promotion to Army captain at Ft. Bragg, NC. **Tiffany** will presumably continue working as a nurse after the baby is born. The due date is sometime in February, but **Don's** not sure exactly which day. The grandparents are **Don's** daughter, **Juliette**, and her husband **Marlin Ritzman**, currently of Lovettsville, VA, near Harper's Ferry, WV.

Kristen Parkhill had a marvelous trip down memory lane in August. In 1994, when she was just a little bit older than son **Caleb** is now, a group of girls from her Girl Scout troop and their dads got to work on some on hard-to-earn badges—now they are all married with kids. The daughters all hated canoeing the first summer, 25 years ago, but they enjoyed the time together so much, they allowed their dads to drag them along year after year until it turned into a beloved tradition! The actual canoe trip is traditionally two days of canoeing, with the first day being the more challenging one - there have been years with as many as 30 portages in one day. However they only did the second, smoother half this year (only two portages), as **Kristen** points out, none of them are getting any younger! They enjoyed a lot of relaxing time around the campfire, which was necessary as the temps dipped into the 50s at night! They spent three days near Paradise, Michigan, on the Two-Hearted

River. After the canoe trip, **Kristen** took a bus to Traverse City (the area they were in was so remote, she couldn't find a place to rent a car.), where she spent a wonderful week with her best friend from college, **Jennifer**, her husband **Jordan**, and their daughter **Quinn**. Knowing how hot it had been in Texas, she took full advantage of the amazing 80s temps and lake breezes, hiking, swimming in Lake Michigan - she even rode a bike for the first time in 10+ years!



8/2/19 The 25th canoe trip for these intrepid canoeists--Top from left: Kurt Tabor, Steve Kohrt (Kristen's dad), Dennis Humpula, Ken Tabor, Eric Meister Bottom from left: Rosalie Tabor, Alicia Tabor, Kristen Parkhill, Stephanie McMahan, Erin Beauchamp, Marci Anderson



8/1/19 Photo taken at at the mouth of the Two-Hearted River at Lake Superior--Kristen Parkhill with her dad Steve Kohrt before embarking on their father-daughter canoe trip--note their matching 25th canoe trip commemorative T-shirts

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

We hadn't seen the **Hawver** family at church for a while, but they had a good reason. **Liz, Zach,** and their 5-year-old son **Atlas** had a wonderful summer touring in a rented RV. They drove from Austin to San Diego and then north along the west coast all the way to Port Angeles, WA. They stopped and visited friends and family all along the way. They got to take **Atlas** to a swimming hole in Oregon they used to frequent when they were just out of high school. They met their goal of doing everything fun they could for as long as they could. **Atlas's** latest adventure was starting kindergarten at Boone Elementary where he attended pre-school last year. **Atlas** loved his time there last year and was most startled to learn that his wonderful teacher from last year would not be his teacher this year. Happily, he is doing just fine with his new teacher and his new class.



8/19 Atlas and his dad Zach enjoyed swimming on their trip

Congratulations to **John Moore** and his USTA league tennis team (The Racquet Warriors — ages 18+) who won the state championship in Dallas in mid-August. They are working even harder on their tennis as they are preparing to compete in the national competition in Oklahoma City in October. **John** is also most pleased to introduce us to his grandson **Reeder David Racino**, son of his daughter **Sara** and her husband **David Racino** (also an avid tennis player). **Reeder** was born May 12 (Mother's Day). **John** reports that **Reeder** just smiled and laughed his way through meeting his Colorado relatives on his first road (and plane) trip to Durango and Denver.



8/2019 5-year-old Atlas Hawver enjoyed his summer adventures in an RV with his parents



7/19 John Moore's new grandson--Reeder Racino

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes



Stephen Russell,

Stephen Russell, Population Research Center faculty research associate, Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor in Child Development and chair of the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, has accepted an invitation to serve as the next director of the School of Human Ecology, beginning in January 2020. Stephen will continue to serve as Flawn Professor and chair of Human Development and Family Services. Congratulations, Stephen!!!

Folks who have been involved with the church for a long time will remember **Omer** and **Zona Galle** who now live in Kansas. Their son **Karl** and his Egyptian wife **Sylvia** are still in **Cairo** and **Sylvia** is still working for USAID. **Karl** is working on a book. However, **Sylvia** has been told that she has a job with USAID in Washington, DC to start in **October** — they hope that all works out and are eager to have them on this side of the ocean. Their daughter **Kristin** has three more Sundays as interim in a UCC Church in Weimar and a week later starts a new interim job at the Disciples of Christ Church on the UT campus. **Kristen's** husband **Brent** is still pastor at the Presbyterian Church in Brenham. They are really excited; as they just got word that the two of them have received a three month Lilly Grant for ministerial renewal and have a little time to prepare for that sabbatical. **Kristen's** daughter **Kaitlyn** graduated at Yale, spent a year studying in South Korea and then went to Tulsa as a Teach For America person in their Head Start program for three years. She then went to Oxford for a year and

acquired a master's in early childhood development. She had already done a master's on the internet from Johns Hopkins. She is now doing research for the same Head Start program in Tulsa. She married **Sam Kirzner** in February, 2018. **Sam** is Jewish. The wedding was in Dallas because his grandmother (now 96) lives there and it was important that she could be at the wedding. **Sam's** paternal grandparents were in Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen in Poland as teenagers and met in a refugee camp after the war ended and then were brought to the U.S. They are delighted to have **Sam** in the family. Last year he also got his master's in public health. **Kristen's** daughter **Mariah** graduated from TCU, worked as program director at MoVal Camp in Missouri for two years, and is now in her second or third year as Youth Director at a large Disciples of Christ Church in Houston. **Kaitlyn** loves the little kids and **Mariah** loves the young teenagers. **Mariah** is in a Seminary program out of Kentucky on the internet. She goes occasionally for short, intense, classes. **Mariah** and **Evan Tiffany** phoned them a couple weeks ago to say that they are engaged. They met **Evan** at **Kaitlyn** and **Sam's** wedding and are so happy for them. The two of them plan to join family here at Christmas time. **Zona** and **Omer** are doing well. **Kaitlyn** and **Sam** gave them Christmas presents-- tickets to "Hamilton" when it came to Tulsa —and recently they enjoyed that with them!

Mel and **Pat Oakes** enjoyed 3 wonderful, cool weeks in San Francisco in late July and August housesitting for friends whose home is just 1 block from Golden Gate Park. In addition to enjoying the cooler temperatures, they really enjoyed spending time with daughter **Mardie** and her 7-year-old son **Durham**. They visited the Exploratorium, went to the Legion of Honor Art Museum in Lincoln Park, took long walks in Golden Gate Park, and visited with some of **Mardie's** friends and a cousin of Pat's. A wonderful highlight was a magical Sunday afternoon in GGP which is closed to vehicular traffic on Sundays-- **Durham** could ride his bike everywhere—and **Mel** and **Mardie** enjoyed a street dance featuring the Lindy Hop—such fun. Here is the video link. <https://www.patandmeloakes.com/MelandMardieOakesDancingSF2019.html>.

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Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

They went back for two more weeks in late August and early September to take advantage of the two months their friends were going to be gone.



7/28/19 Mel, Durham, Mardie, and Pat had a wonderful picnic in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco



8/20/19 A great group enjoyed delicious barbecue at SLAB Barbecue on Research Blvd.--a new Tuesday night weekly event organized by Faye and Andy Dierksen—around the table from the left--Andy, Roberto Hernandez, Whit Bodman, Faye, Sara and Dave Ross, Jaime Hadley, Andy's mom Tracy Dierksen, Tony Rogers, and Jonathan Geer

History Corner

On Sunday, September 29, **Amy Kent** and our children's Sunday School will host an Open House at 10:00 a.m. upstairs in the Towery Wing. In celebration of the children's Sunday School Kick-Off, the History Corner is featuring some Sunday School-related photos from past years. If you realize you have some Sunday School photos from years past, please share them with Pat & Mel Oakes so they can become a part of our archives.



About 1957 Cathy Hubbs teaching Sunday school to two mystery children



1957 Mrs. Johnningsmeier teaching Sunday school to ?, Laura and John Hubbs

History Corner, cont.



1975 Clark Hubbs with Sunday school children--Allison Cole, Mardie Oakes, and ?



5/1984 Farewell party for David Bartholomew—our intern who worked with the high school class—Sarah and Seth Murphy, Beth Oakes, Paula Briggs, David Bartholomew, Cathy Camden, Lana Harris, and Laura Camden

History Corner, cont.



12/18/05 Jen Howicz taking a bow after the Christmas pageant



10/8/17 Sunday school kick-off with a New Orleans flair delighted young and older alike--- Francesca Dietz watching William Harris tell Joy Penticuff's fortune, Rachel Dietz taking with teacher Amy Kent, Alden Harris and his mom Warinda



12/05 Christmas Sunday school pageant--12/05 Christmas pageant back--Cameron Goff, Emily Binford, ?, Emily Howicz, Wamene Yowika, Noah Binford; front--Megan Goff, Tiina Tapia's niece, Giovanni Fracasso, Katie Lemley

History Corner, cont.

**ANSWER TO ONE OF THE
JUNE 'GUESS WHO' CHALLENGE PHOTOS**



1975 Don Miles at WDVH, a country music station in Gainesville, FL