

# THE VISITOR

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

408 West Twenty-Third Street, Austin, Texas 78705-5214

(512) 472-2370 Fax: (512) 472-1175

e-mail: ucausti@SWBell.net    Web site: congregational.faithweb.com

**Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt**

**Rev. John Towery, Pastor Emeritus**

---

**“Disguised since childhood,  
haphazardly assembled  
from voices and fears and little pleasures,  
we come of age as masks.**

**Our true face never speaks.”      Rainier Maria Rilke**

**“If you are the son of God . . .”      Satan**

At the beginning of Lent, we read a story that sets the tone for much of our Lenten spirituality: Jesus enters the wilderness and suffers Satan’s temptation. While there are various ways we can interpret this story, I’m partial to New Testament scholar N.T. Wright’s interpretation.

In Wright’s view, the story of Jesus in the wilderness suggests that Jesus, at some point soon after his baptism, underwent a deep and profound internal struggle regarding the nature of his vocation. This internal struggle was a private one. Jesus may have shared the details of his inner struggle with other people, or he may not have done so. At any rate, the authors of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, felt it important in their portrayals of Jesus to include an account of Jesus’ internal struggle, and to portray it as a struggle with the power they believed to be God’s most powerful rival, personified by the character Satan.

According to Wright, in Jesus’ day, there was no single blueprint or set of instructions for what a Jewish messiah was to say or do. Nevertheless, there were some deep-seeded and popular cultural expectations in terms of what people hoped for or were prepared to demand from their messiah. *If you truly are the son of God*, then you will do x, y, and z. And yet these deep-seeded and popular expectations conflicted with the call Jesus felt deep within himself. And so the interior tension, struggle, and conflict within Jesus: be what other people wanted him to be, or be who God was calling him to be?

**No one lives his life.**

**Disguised since childhood,  
haphazardly assembled  
from voices and fears and little pleasures,  
we come of age as masks.**

**Our true face never speaks.**

In a sense, the story of Jesus in the wilderness is the story of Jesus coming of age. Will Jesus disguise his true face with a messianic mask that is culturally acceptable?

Will Jesus compromise his soul in exchange for the little pleasures he knows he can obtain for himself through his power and charisma?

Will Jesus submit to the many desperate voices pleading with him—this is who we want you to be, this is who we *need* you to be!—and will Jesus capitulate to fear knowing that when people discover he’s not what they want his life will be in danger?

Or, will Jesus' true face speak?  
The synoptic gospels are, in effect, stories about the consequences of that decision.  
Are not our own life stories, in effect, the consequence of the same decision?  
Are we who others have created us to be, who others want or need us to be?  
Are we assembled by voices and fears and little pleasures?  
Do we wear a mask?  
Or are we the person God has created us to be?  
What are the consequences of our decision?

From my understanding, this is what a powerful Lenten practice entails: asking ourselves daily whether our true face — our Christ face — is speaking, or whether we're disguising ourselves with a mask either out of fear or to grasp at some little pleasure, and then noticing all the consequences of that decision as our life unfolds.

In a literal understanding of the season of Lent, we can say Lent lasts 40 days. In a more nuanced understanding of Lent, we can say Lent is an aspect of our spirituality that we face every single day of our life as we ask ourselves that question and live the consequences.

I pray, may you find inspiration and strength in knowing that Jesus experienced stress, tension, and conflict within himself, that he decided daily to be the person God created him to be, and that he experienced the stress, tension, and conflict that resulted from that decision.

Like Jesus, may your true face speak, even if it means speaking from a cross.

Tom

## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

**Palm Sunday Service — April 17, 11:00 am**

**Good Friday Service — April 22, 7 pm**

**Easter Sunday Sunrise Service — April 24, 6:45 am Lady Bird Lake (north shore just east of I-35)**

**Easter Celebration Service — 11:00 am**

Please join us on Palm Sunday as we process with palms through our church courtyard into our sanctuary. The service begins with praise and adoration and moves toward the cross of suffering and death. On Good Friday, we'll gather in our sanctuary in the evening for a reflective service of readings, music, and silence that will include sharing Holy Communion and experiencing the grief and darkness surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. On Easter morning, we'll gather at sunrise on the shore of Lady Bird Lake to celebrate Christ's resurrection, and then head back to our sanctuary to participate in our liturgy of bringing the cross alive with flowers.

### CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Trustees Chair	Jaime Hadley
Deacons Chair	Joe McMillan
Christian Outreach Chair	Bill Beardall
Moderator	Reuel Nash
Treasurer	David Ross
Financial Secretary	Pam Tucker
Clerk	Betty Bodman
Historian	Whit Bodman

## *Thank You*

Dear Members of CCoA,  
Thank you so much for your good wishes on my retirement. I know the lovely card is authentic from the coffee stains.

Thank you as well for the Gift Certificate and refreshment vouchers for the Long Center. It is a lovely venue and a treasure for Austin. Bob and I will enjoy experiencing something special because of your thoughtful gift.

Trish (Karli)

## PERSONALS

by Pat Oakes

### Soup Supper and Talent Show

Oh my! **Nodie Murphy** did it again-- she put together a great soup supper and talent show on Friday, March 5 that was enjoyed by more than 40 folks. The performers ranged in age from 5-94 -very impressive! The opening extravaganza and astounding finale featured cloggers Katie Lemley, Emily Howicz, Allison -Jeffrey's girlfriend, Jeffrey and Lynne Lemley, Jaime Hadley, Dennis and



Betty and Whit Bodman with new member Megan Snell

Nodie Murphy, Beth Placek, and Cathy Hubbs--having a great time pretending to need a walker), Rambie Briggs on stomp fiddle, Bill Beardall on guitar, and choir--Norma Hawes, Betty Phillips, Talley Summerlin, Fran Briggs, Chester Rosson, Lucy ?, Joe McMillan, and pianist Terry Heller.

Bill Beardall got the show off to a great start with a song-singing and playing the guitar. Savanna Tucker astonished folks with her jump-roping skills and her brother Harrison brought down the house with his rendition of "I can't pay the rent." Katie Lemley and Emily Howicz performed a funny skit and Whit and Betty Bodman were hilarious as Whit talked about his mysterious talent (straightening things) and Betty's talent (being able to finish Whit's sentences). Shannon Quisenberry sang a great show tune, and Bill Mueller sang some fun songs. Joan Mueller did a skit which included childhood poems.

Betty Appel sang beautifully, and Florence Castle and Pat Oakes played "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" as a piano duet. Beth Placek enlivened the audience by performing a belly dance, and Vic Appel moved everyone with his ren-

dition of "Oh, Captain, My Captain." Chester Rosson, Dennis Murphy, Norma Hawes, and Nodie Murphy got toes tapping with "Daddy Sang Bass, Momma Sang Tenor." Katie Lemley delighted everyone, especially two-year-olds Juliann Lippert who was dancing in the aisle, by playing Humoresque on the cello. Elizabeth Freese surprised us all with a hidden talent and did an astrological reading for the church--notable as we are celebrated



Talent show cloggers: Nodie Murphy, Cathy Hubbs (using the walker for a fun effect--not for real!), with musicians Terry Heller and Rambie Briggs, Whit Bodman holding the lamp, and Vic Appel looking on



Chester Rosson, Dennis Murphy, Norma Hawes, Nodie Murphy They sang a lively rendition of "Daddy Sang Bass, Momma Sang Tenor.." Julianne Lippert loved it.

110 years at the end of March (things looked pretty favorable!). Betty Phillips and Nodie Murphy were quite catty in their Mozart-inspired feline duet. Mel Oakes did a science experiment on polarized light and Dave Ross read his meaningful and favorite excerpt from HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Jaime Hadley brought down the house



Talent show opening number: Jeffrey and Lynne Lemley, Jaime Hadley, Dennis Murphy, Beth Placek, Nodie Murphy, Rambie Briggs and Bill Beardall.

with his "Duck!" skit, and Bill Phillips had everyone singing along after he taught folks "The Hawaiian War Chant." Amy Harris showed us her new talent--she has learned to play the cello (being a fabulous violinist already). Talley Summerlin sang an original song and accompanied himself on the guitar.

Not to be outdone, daughters Rose and Vivian sang a round of "Frere Jacques" with their dad. Norma Hawes and Steve Domingue found it a great way to celebrate their 29th wedding anniversary! All in all, it was a great evening! The free will offering will go toward the Fine Arts Committee at the church. (See pictures)

### New Members

The church was delighted to accept **Jo Jensen** into membership on Sunday, March 20. Jo, a good friend of Cecile Adams, is a chaplain at Dell Children's Hospital here in Austin. Jo's husband, Bob Garrett, attended the service as well as **Felicia and Eliot Scott** who joined the church by letter of transfer last month. (See picture)

### Church Friends in Japan During Earthquake

Former pastor **Yoshi Kaneda** left for Japan the Tuesday before the earthquake on Friday, March 11, to attend his and his wife Setsuko's college choir reunion. He was with friends in Nara, the ancient capital of Japan near Kyoto, and knew nothing of the earthquake until the next morning on TV. All of his family and friends are OK. He called Sunday night to report to Setsuko that the reunion was held as planned on Saturday, and he had a wonderful get-together with his former students on Sunday. He then travelled to Tokyo for more visits with friends. He said he was still planning to have a get-together with his sister and her husband as well as the Adachis (friends of theirs who came to church many times)) as they planned. He arrived home safely on Sunday, March 20.

Yoshi says, "Although I myself watched a great deal of the disaster and devastation through the news media in Japan, I also have witnessed the most beautiful stories of support and help given by the people all over the country for the victims. Maybe, for the first time since WW II, people showed their earnest desire to get united for giving help in action for the victims. That's a positive sign I am glad I noticed."

A part of our church family 25 years ago, **Dennis Schneider**, who has been living in Tokyo since then, reported that he and his wife Kazuko were fine after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Dennis was visiting his wife at the hospital (she has early onset Alzheimer's), and was just leaving when he saw his car shaking with no one near it. After the shaking stopped, he drove home easily and found lots of things on the floor including a full coffee pot (not full anymore), but even though it was glass it was not broken. There was lots of stuff on the floor but almost nothing broken. The piano had moved 6 or 8 inches out from the wall, and all the photos and knickknacks on top of it were either behind it or on the floor in front of it. He knows he was lucky, but was also being very careful opening cabinets so that he would not get a shower of dishes on his head. Living in the suburbs of Tokyo, he had gas, water & electricity, but lots of people downtown weren't so lucky. One report said 3,980,000 households in the Tokyo area had no electricity, and it was cold (even gas heat needs electricity for the controls) so no hot water for them, either. Subways and other commuter trains were all stopped in the Tokyo area pending checking the tracks for safety, so lots of people were sleeping in their offices or schools. Land-line and cell phone service was out in a lot of places so they could not let their family at home know they were OK.

**Jesse and Lolita Binford** reported that their son Lincoln, his wife Nancy, and their children, Emily and Noah, were in Hawaii and experienced a small tsunami resulting from the Japanese earthquake while there. Everyone was evacuated to higher ground, everyone was OK, although some homes in the area were washed away. Nancy and the kids came home, but Lincoln stayed another 2 weeks for training.

**Pam Tucker and Alison Goodgame** celebrated spring break by having a great long weekend at Lake LBJ with Savanna and Harrison. The kids really enjoyed it because that meant quality time with mom! They met three other couples with children and got away from the crowds generated by SXSW.

**Mona Maser** is enjoying her new job with the VA through the same contractor that her husband Jim works for (Kforce Government Systems). She is now the administrative assistant for one of the directors over at the VA

building on Woodward at Ben White. She loves her commute, since she can walk to work! Jim used to work in that building but now he commutes to a new government building near the airport. It is wonderful for Mona and Jim as she spent more than a year looking for work. Mona likes her job--and they like her--so that is great news.

**Victoria Li** and her youngest daughter **Lillian** had a wonderful trip to the Mediterranean in March. Their 12-day cruise included stops in Rome, Athens, Ephesus, Istanbul, and Malta. Lillian is a senior at St. Stephen's Episcopal School and has been accepted to Vanderbilt which she will be attending in the fall.

**Nodie Murphy** got back from the Twin Cities area in mid-March, where she was taking care of her sister, Pam, who just had foot surgery. It was a great opportunity for her to visit with Pam and revisit the area where she spent 10 important years of her life. Nodie had some anxiety about driving on ice, but the weather cooperated and stayed above freezing during the day until the day she left. Son Ned has temporarily moved up there until he attends basic training in August, so she got to see him, too; he even gave her a ride to the airport. Best of all, it gave Nodie a chance to "pass on" all the loving care and attention she received during her rehabilitation from knee surgery, and to move from "receiver" to "giver" once more. Nodie asks, "Is it true that we are 'given' hardships to learn how to help others?" She doesn't know, but she does know that where post-op care is concerned, it is better to give than to receive!

**Dave Ross** spotted a wonderful article on the late biologist/ichthyologist and much-loved member of this church, **Clark Hubbs**, in the April issue of *Texas Parks and Wildlife*. Entitled "The Fish Wrangler," write Wendee Holtcamp says, "He left a true legacy not only to Texas' conservation and fish biology, but also to the students he deeply inspired." See if you can find a copy — or ask Dave to send you a copy of the article.

**Jeri Winter Gradecki** had hoped to be in church on March 20 with her son Wylan, but her sister's baby was being predicted to come earlier than expected, so she decided to stay near home in the Chicago area. While her husband Ray has to stay home while attending nursing school, Jeri hopes to make it down in May or September, not wanting to introduce their son to the horrors of an Austin summer!

It was great to see **Heather** (make that Doctor Heather) and **Zac Lytle** at church on Sunday, March 20. We are their Austin church home, but they actually live in Dallas. Heather is doing her OB/GYN residency in Dallas where

Zac is working in affordable housing. Heather and Zac spent a year in North Carolina where Heather finished up a public health degree and Zac worked for Builders of Hope, an affordable housing group there. He convinced them that it was a good idea to have a branch in Dallas and that is what he is doing now. Heather and Zac enjoyed a week off from her grueling schedule and had time to come to Austin to check out SXSW and visit friends.

Members of the church family in the late 1990s no doubt remember our church violinist **Felicia Day**. She graduated from UT with a double degree in math and violin performance and left us in 1998 to go to Hollywood where she has done very well. She was the keynote speaker for SXSW in March and has won recognition for her role in "Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog" (Google it--it is fun to watch) and numerous other Web productions.

**David and Edith Scott** (they were here for a year in the mid-1980s) who live near Glasgow, Scotland, report that David, Jr., was set to fly to Dubai in mid-March for a short work trip. It seems to be quite stable for the time being but Edith was not going to be happy till he's back home. David and Edith will be making their annual trip to the south of France at the end of April. They can't wait to feel some heat in their bones!

**The Church Ladies Spelling Team** (4 time winners and placing every other time) will be participating for the 7th time in the 8th annual Great Grown-Up Spelling Bee put on by the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas. The event will be held at the Austin Music Hall on Thursday, April 28, from 11:30 am -1:15 pm. They have to raise \$1500 to field a team, so are asking for donations from their church members (Congregational Church of Austin--Pat Oakes and Central Presbyterian--Susan Richter and Laurel Stoddard). Doyal and Tommie Pinkard have agreed to take care of collecting the contributions. If you would like to donate, either give your contribution to Pat or Tommie or Doyal at church, or send it to Pinkards at 813 Castle Ridge Road, Austin, TX 78746.

**Mel and Pat Oakes** enjoyed consecutive visits from two of their daughters during March. Mardie Oakes and her husband Tony Deifell came for 8 days to be a part of the interactive component of SXSW. Mardie and Tony went home to their houseboat in Sausalito, CA, the night of the great full moon. They got home four hours late to quite an adventure. The extra big moon + lots of rain led to an EXTREMELY high tide, which was flooding their freeway exit as well as the marina parking lot. They left their luggage in the car and had to walk in water up to their mid-shins for about 150 feet to get from the parking lot to their dock... and it was very cold water! Tony was smart and

took off his shoes and socks and rolled up his pants... Mardie's shoes, socks and jeans were still drying the next day. A reasonably large branch also came down and missed their Miata by about a foot in the parking lot. Mardie's phone was dead, otherwise she would have taken some pics!

Their boat was tossing around quite noisily for several hours. They arrived home around 1 am, which was right at the highest tide, and the wind was blowing pretty hard. Daughter Sarah came five days after they left to enjoy part of her spring break. Sarah had already bought her ticket to come here before she and her now husband Joe Pierce found their dream house and got married in December. Joe is saving his vacation time to come to the family reunion scheduled for July where he'll meet all the family. A good time was had by all.

### GEARING UP FOR THE SUMMER HEAT

In mid-March your Trustees moved forward with the next step in bringing the church's cooling and heating systems up to date by installing a new high-efficiency heat pump system in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Sunday School rooms.

The new system replaced a 15 year old A/C unit with a new high efficiency model that should save money on cooling bills, and it also ended that area's dependence on the 50 year old boiler unit for winter heating. In April we plan to replace the A/C unit for the Sanctuary, which is over 20 years old, required several repair visits last year to get through the summer, and could go out at any moment.

Then the last step in this project will be to replace the unit in the choir room, which will end completely the use of the antiquated boiler system for heat. All three of these new units, as well as the Fellowship Hall and office units that have been replaced in the last 2 years have programmable thermostats which also helps us save money and the planet by using energy for cooling and heating only when there are people in the building.

Trustees



My sincere thanks to you all for your thoughtful expressions of condolence as well as the lovely flowers given in remembrance of my mother-in-law, Marian Roberts Whatley. CCA's outpouring of understanding and support during this difficult time is deeply appreciated by the entire Whatley family.

Kathy Whatley 6

**Hildegard Kuehne Everett** was a long-time member of the church--and her father Dr. J. M. Kuehne was an early member of the church and on the Department of Physics faculty at UT. Her family was part of the early German community here in Austin. Many years ago she taught me how to make Easter eggs the way the early German settlers in Fredericksburg did — using bluebonnets and onion skins. Because of the drought this year, there won't be many bluebonnets, so give onion skins a try.



Easter eggs--died with onion skins and bluebonnets. Hildegard Everett taught Pat Oakes how to make these many years ago.

You will need the papery part of onion skins (yellow or red--I have never tried white--don't know if that works!) or 5-6 bluebonnets per egg--plus as many uncooked white-shelled eggs as you would like. You will also need strips of cloth and straight pins. Carefully holding an

egg in one hand, arrange the papery onion skin around the shell, holding it as tightly as you can and covering as much of the egg as you can. Take a strip of cloth and wrap it as tightly as possible around the egg, covering the onion skin and the shell. Secure the end of the cloth strip with a straight pin, taking care not to pierce the egg! Place the eggs (onion ones in one pot and bluebonnet ones in another). Cover with cold water, bring to a boil, boil a minute or so and then let them sit in the boiling hot water for 30 minutes or so. Run cold water over the eggs and remove the cloth strips. The onion-dyed eggs will be lovely shades of yellow, gold, and brown and the bluebonnet eggs will be a pale greenish/gray/blue with imprints of the flowers in delicate blues and greens and flecks of pink or purple.

### "GREAT METANOIA: TRANSFORMING OUR STORIES, OURSELVES AND THE WORLD"

Join us for the second half of the "GM" class (even if you missed the fall session) to examine the connections between competing cultural narratives, our sense of who we are, the mission of the church, and eco/social justice in the world. Our consciousness swims amongst big stories - such as evolution, the Bible, capitalism, and deep ecology along with those of our local community and personal lives. Each has different consequences.

As Christ's disciples, let us contemplate together our responsibility and creativity in choosing, telling, and living stories that result in both personal growth and prophetic love for our earth community. Class will meet Sundays after worship until 2pm, March 13 – April 17.

## BRAZOS ASSOCIATION NEWS

Over the course of 2011, I am and will be teaching United Church of Christ History and Polity to several in care students in the Brazos Association. This fulfills one of a number of requirements for ordination in the UCC. Over the past few years, Whit Bodman of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and I have, at different times, led these classes for our students, helping them learn the rich and varied history and the governance of the UCC as well as working with them to begin to develop an identity as



Felicia Scott, Becky Nash, Cindy, Beth Gleason, Liz Nash--El Salvador group--gave an excellent presentation about their work there on Sunday, March 6, during the service.

ministers in our denomination. Our national offices support this endeavor through the UCC Polity Teachers Network.

This group meets annually to share ideas and resources. A few weeks ago, I attended the annual meeting of this network, held on March 2-3 at the national UCC offices in Cleveland. Participants included Barbara Brown Zikmund, who is the “dean” of the UCC historians and former President of Hartford Seminary; Randi Walker, author of perhaps the best known book written in recent years commenting on UCC history and polity and Professor of Church History at Pacific School of Religion; Anita Bradshaw, Director of Judicatory-Based Programs at Eden Theological Seminary; and several other UCC pastors and Conference staff from around the country who teach History and Polity in different settings.

Among the *many* ideas and resources discussed, we examined the wealth of readings and other information available in this area on the United Church of Christ website at <http://www.ucc.org/education/polity/>, we examined a comprehensive list of topics that should be covered in this

course (to give us all guidance in what to teach), and we discussed different ways to teach the class that would allow working with people who would be better served by having at least part of the course taught long-distance. It was a very helpful weekend. I hope we can use what I learned to better serve our students working toward ordination, those who will be working in the future to be Licensed Ministers, and those in our churches who would like to learn more about the UCC in depth.

In late January, I went with a group of 5 women from Congregational Church of Austin to San Salvador and Alegria, El Salvador on a mission trip with UCC churches from Iowa and Wisconsin. We worshiped and worked side-by-side with many people who live in the areas around Alegria to build two community centers and a vegetable garden. The buildings will allow the communities around the projects to have decent places to meet for community activities and, as needed, for worship.

The garden project, which involved clearing and terracing a steep slope, will yield a better diet for people of the village around it, as well as opportunities to sell the surplus to add to their (meager) incomes. This trip is a continuation of an effort started through the South Central Conference Board of Directors, at the invitation of Rev. Tom Nielsen, a UCC pastor who has taken many groups to this area, to work in partnership with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (Emmanuel Baptist Church) of San Salvador. It was an incredibly rich experience. We hope to go next year with others from our Association and our Conference joining us.

I would be happy to come speak with individuals and churches about the trip. Contact me at 512-231-0045 or [lizknash@gmail.com](mailto:lizknash@gmail.com) if you are interested.

Finally, here is a reminder to *save the date* for our Brazos Association Spring Meeting on Sunday afternoon, May 1, 3 pm though dinner at St. John's UCC in Burton. You are all invited and encouraged to join this time of fellowship, worship, meeting, and program. You are all also invited to attend the **Annual Meeting of the South Central Conference in Clear Lake, Texas, June 3-5**, in what promises to be a very fine program and weekend. Registration materials for the Conference Annual Meeting have been sent out to churches and ministers. I encourage you to check with your church office or the South Central Conference office for registration information if you want to come to Clear Lake.

Blessings in Christ,  
Liz Nash  
Brazos Association Minister

The Congregational Church of Austin  
408 West Twenty-Third Street  
Austin, Texas 78705-5214

**Return Service Requested**

## **Deadline for May VISITOR — April 21**

**We are changing the way we do refreshments  
for fellowship hour**



### **Refreshments**

#### **FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS:**

We are changing the way we do refreshments for fellowship hour. There will be two sign-ups instead of one. (A sign-up sheet is on a clipboard in the Fellowship hall.) One will be to sign up to bring "goodies" and the other will be to clean up. "Goodies" should just be a little snack to go with coffee and punch. This does NOT need to be elaborate. Please consider signing-up to clean-up. It will help tremendously and won't take long if the "goodies" are modest. Thank you!