

# THE VISITOR

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

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**Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt**

**Rev. John Towery, Pastor Emeritus**

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*...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
nether shall they learn war any more.*

Isaiah 2: 4 and Micah 4: 3

**T**he Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College recently launched a major study called *The Costs of War* in an effort to discern the true costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the counter-insurgency effort in Pakistan. Neta Crawford, professor of political science at Boston University, and Catherine Lutz, professor of anthropology and international studies at Brown University, headed up the study that incorporated the research of a number of academics from universities around the country. The goal of the study was to discern not only the immediate costs of these wars in terms of dollars spent and lives lost, but their ripple effects on such things as oil consumption and the environment.

In terms of dollar amounts, the study estimates these wars will cost the United States four trillion dollars in money already spent, money obligated for the future, and money borrowed to be paid back with interest. However, this four trillion dollar estimate doesn't include some future expenses, like the cost of the prosthetic devices that wounded veterans will need to replace in the future. Nor does it include money for the intelligence budget that the US government doesn't disclose, money that pays for things like condolence payments to the relatives of civilians killed in US operations, and drone reconnaissance missions and predator strikes in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some analysts believe these expenses cost us fifty-five million dollars a year.

In terms of the death toll, the study estimates that a total of 225,000 people—both military personnel and civilians—have been killed in these wars. The civilian death toll is estimated to be 137,000. Eight million Afghans and Iraqis have been displaced from their homes.

As for energy use and the environment, the Department of Defense, the country's single largest consumer of fuel, has consumed four billion, six hundred million gallons of fuel a year. Dangerous levels of toxic dust caused by military-base garbage burning pits, combined with wide-spread deforestation, have disrupted bird migration routes across Afghanistan. Despite a ban on killing the endangered snow leopard, US Army bases in Afghanistan are now lucrative markets for snow leopard pelts that poor Afghans are bringing to sell.

The report chronicles the many destructive impacts these three violent conflicts have had on human life and other forms of life on earth. And that's just three conflicts: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. What would such a study look like for the Congo and other war-torn countries in Africa in terms of lives lost, bodies wounded, families displaced, money spent, economies wrecked, and landscapes devastated? How much is the festering conflict between India and Pakistan costing both of those countries? What could Indians and Pakistanis achieve if they didn't have to divert untold resources into goading one another on and then defending themselves against one another?

The human impulse to resolve conflicts through violence denies humanity of so much we could otherwise enjoy. So many resources that could be used to develop and uplift humanity are diverted towards tearing down and destroying humanity. War, and the never-ending preparation for war, diminishes us in so many ways. It causes so much pain, hardship, and grief—for us and the earth itself.

Consider for a moment the impact of war on our own nation: four trillion dollars. We've got a super-committee in Congress right now wrestling over how to cut a bit over *one* trillion dollars from the federal budget over the next ten years, with effects that will likely hurt the most vulnerable people in our society and continue damaging our environment. Think of how *four* trillion dollars could have been invested in ways that enhance human life—educating and providing opportunities for our young people, lifting people out of poverty, investing in technologies that protect the environment. We're all paying for those lost four trillion dollars.

Those who actually fight these wars, along with their families, and those who actually live in the war zones, it is they who pay the highest price for these wars. But even those of us who aren't directly involved in the fighting, those of us who don't live in the war zones, we still pay a price for living in a society that must pay a four trillion dollar price tag for these violent conflicts, and must lay off teachers in our schools, watch more people fall into poverty, and pump more oil from more places to pay for and fuel our war machine.

The prophetic vision from scripture is that human beings will transform the weapons we've constructed to fight, injure, and kill one another into tools we can use to uplift, preserve, and benefit one another. We'll transform what we've created to destroy human life into tools to enhance human life. And yet we still live in a world in which we're actively doing the opposite—transforming many of the resources we could use to uplift, preserve, and benefit one another into weapons to fight, injure, and kill one another. We're beating our plowshares into swords, and our pruning hooks into spears.

The perennial question confronts us: how do we live faithfully toward our faith tradition's vision of shalom, and how do we make that vision a reality? Let's pray that we may be, in some way, shape, or form, an instrument of God's peace.

TOM

### Pledge Sunday is November 13

At the Congregational Church of Austin, you are given the opportunity to put your faith into action through effective volunteer and outreach ministries. Our contributions of time, talent and resources allow our church to be actively and effectively involved in many outreach and in-reach ministries.

Please consider your pledge mindfully and prayerfully. If you have not pledged in the past, please consider pledging this year. **Pledge Sunday is November 13th.** (See pledge form on page 7.)

#### 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
Web mistress	Sara Ross

### Micah 6 Food Pantry Needs by Joan Mueller

Please bring plastic grocery bags, diapers, large canned meats, fish, poultry, or make cash donations towards the purchase of food. Checks can be made to **Micah 6** or **Congregational Church of Austin** with a note that the donation is for Micah 6 Food Pantry. A basket is regularly brought forward at church each Sunday with all such donations. There are a distressing number of people who are living below the poverty line in Austin, including many children. This effort by our church members and friends, along with other Micah 6 Austin churches, enables us to continuously help our poorer neighbors.

The Micah 6 Food Pantry continually needs the support of volunteers. The food pantry is a ministry that helps low-income individuals and families meet their most basic need for food and sustenance. Recipients of the food pantry come from many walks of life: some have mental and physical disabilities, some are burdened with addictions, some are undocumented immigrants with families who do not qualify for government assistance, and some have unexpectedly experienced unemployment or other crisis and are unable to provide food for their families.

If you are a potential volunteer, please contact Pantry Director, Linda Williams, at 826-3015 to schedule your first visit.

## Personals by Pat Oakes

**K**ee **Ben White** in your prayers. Ben got to go home to his apartment in Westminster Manor from Seton Hospital (where he had lung surgery) and Seton Rehabilitation Hospital in late October. Sons Carl and Cappy have been taking turns flying in from Denver and California to keep an eye on Ben, as has his sister **Pat Warren** who lives closer to Austin. Ben is weak and tired and finds it difficult to talk very much, but he would appreciate notes and cards. His address is 4100 Jackson Ave, Apt. 16, Austin, TX 78731.

Pastor emeritus **John Towery** is making small improvements at the rehab center and is now able to walk with a walker and is getting around well in a wheelchair. The family is hoping that John will be well enough to go back to **Parsons House** where he and **Eleanor** have lived for the past several years. This will all be decided in early November. You can send cards or notes to them at 1130 Camino la Costa, #116, Austin, TX 78752-3952. You can reach Eleanor by phone at 512-453-1800, their longtime phone number. Eleanor enjoyed hearing the Silver Strings (which includes our own **Sara Ross** on the viola) on Halloween morning.

A grand time was had by folks at the **Equal Justice Center Mini-Golf Tournament** at Peter Pan Golf on Barton Springs Road on Sept. 29th. **Bill Beardall**, director of the **Equal Justice Center**, did a fine job as announcer, greeter, and emcee for the evening. A good crowd showed up for the event in spite of threatening clouds (which didn't produce anything anyway!). Our church sponsored a



Claude London, Fred and Carol Scott, Mel and Pat Oakes, Betty and Will Bodman at the Equal Justice Center Mini-Golf Tournament.

hole and several of us were there to enjoy the company, delicious barbecue, and challenging golf!

**Carol Scott** is recovering well from cataract surgery and will be teaching two "Active Parenting" sessions at the **Georgetown Project** in November. The presentation and discussions are designed for area parents and caregivers of children ages 5 to 12; however, those who have children of other ages are welcome. **"Teaching Children Responsibility and Discipline"** is scheduled Thursday, November 3 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. "Redirecting Misbehavior" is scheduled Thursday, November 17, also from 6:30 to 8:30. Classes are at the **Community Resource Center**, 805 W. University Ave. Interested persons may call 512-864-3008 for information. The Georgetown Project organization provides a number of community resource programs aimed at increasing positive social, emotional and educational outcomes for children.

**Greg Futch** wants to let everyone know that he and **Margaret's** first (and maybe only!) grandchild is DUE sometime in the first week of November. So, their son and daughter-in-law, **Matt and Cyndi**, are getting more and more nervous and excited! Greg and Margaret are heading to Denver on November 12th. Cyndi's parents are arriving ahead of them, and will stay a few weeks, and Greg and Margaret will be there near the end of their stay, so their visits will overlap. Margaret also has a sister and an old friend living in the Denver area, so there will be other places to stay, to give their expanded family members a little break from relatives. Everyone is most hopeful, of course, and getting antsy with anticipation!!



Ned Murphy (left) at basic training at Ft. Benning, Georgia

**Ned Murphy**, son of **Nodie and Dennis Murphy**, is about two-thirds through basic training at **Fort Benning, Georgia**. When he finishes, he'll stay on to complete Cavalry Scout training there. Nodie, son Seth, and Dennis

## PERSONALS—continued from page 3

are planning to go to Ned's graduation in mid-December. Ned writes his folks that he's okay but feels very isolated. He would like, very much, to hear from anyone who remembers him and cares to write. His address is

PV2 Murphy, Benjamin  
194th AR BDE, 5-15th Cav  
E Troop, 1st Platoon  
Fort Benning, GA 31905

**Eunice Paul** has been celebrating her birthday in fine style! Last spring she made a sudden decision that to celebrate her 90th birthday at the end of September she should like to take a trip with her three children on the **Queen Mary 2**. Not surprisingly, everyone agreed it was a great idea. **Bob and Eunice** were members of the church for a number of years during the 1980s when Bob was on the faculty of the Presbyterian seminary--and their son-in-law **Dean Tapley**, a UCC pastor in the UK, swapped pulpits for a summer with **John Towery**.) Leading up to the big trip, they had a family dinner party with all the trimmings as well as two surprise tea-parties. Eunice and daughter **Lydia Tapley** were flying from England to New York on October 19th for what the family regards as the *real* celebration - extravagant nostalgia. They were to spend a few days in Connecticut and then meet sons **Tim and Martin** (who live nearby) in New York City to sail back on the *Queen Mary 2* on October 23rd.

**Ranae Beeker's** daughter, **Alethea**, was married on October 1 in Keene, New Hampshire, where the family is from. Ranae said that it drizzled a bit, so they adjourned to a wonderfully picturesque, renovated, old barn for the rest of the festivities. Alethea's husband, **William Robbins**, lives in Austin and works at Collings Guitars. Alethea, an artist, is in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico as part of the **Starry Night Artists Residency Program** until January, when she will return to Austin. Alethea also teaches two on-line courses in art history for the **University of Pittsburgh**.

**Don Miles** was all smiles on Sunday, the 23rd of October. His son **Richard** and daughter-in-law **Phoebe** from the D.C. area joined Don in the choir, adding to the lovely music. His daughter **Juliette** and son-in-law **Marlin Ritzman** from Smithville Lake, Missouri, were in Austin over the weekend, too, as all of them celebrated "empty nest weekend." Richard and Phoebe's three kids and Juliette and Marlin's two kids are all now in college--and they thought it was time to celebrate that fact. A good time was had by all.

On, **Friday, November 11**, there will be a festive celebration of **New Life Institute's** 25 years of services to the Austin area community. New Life Institute is a center for counseling, education and spiritual growth affiliated with 4

the **Austin District United Methodist Church**, but serving people of all faiths and all walks of life. A special part of the evening will be to honor **Rev. Bob Breihan's** role in founding, directing, and "worrying over" the Institute for all those years. Bob founded the Institute with support from a small group of pastors and laypeople in the Austin area and was its Director until 2000. He served on the Board of Directors until this past June and continues to work as a marriage and family counselor, only recently cutting back to 2 days a week. According to his wife, **Rev. Sarah Bentley**, Bob probably will not ever "retire" from serving others around him, but she does hope he will take a break next spring so they can travel and visit family and friends. The celebration will begin at 6:30 at **Tarrytown United Methodist Church**. Reservations are required. If you are interested in attending the celebration or contributing to the Institute in honor of Bob, call 512-469-9447 or see the Institute's website, [www.newlifetexas.org](http://www.newlifetexas.org).

Recently, **Marilyn Gaddis and George Carruthers** flew to Billings, Montana, to spend a week with George's nephew and wife. On their last visit, they were snow-bound. This time the temperature was about the same as San Marcos! They visited the **Montana History Museum** in Bozeman, enjoyed a Sunday brunch with western music in the tiny town of Molt, and drove over **Beartooth Pass** to **Cooke City**. The road over the pass closed for the season on Columbus Day. The aspen trees were turning gold and orange and there were a few patches of snow on the high peaks. The Billings area has been overrun with grasshoppers and the nephew's newly planted bushes and trees have been stripped of their leaves. However, the insects have been a "feast" for the wild turkeys roaming near the house. Living in the lowlands, it's nice to be able to get our "mountain and fall colors fix" while visiting relatives!

**John and Carol Burlinson's** news is that their son **Jake's** National Guard unit (1-171st General Support Aviation Battalion) is being redirected from **Kuwait** to **Afghani-**



Jake Burlinson recently completed high altitude flight training and will be redirected to Afghanistan from Kuwait in February 2012.

## Brazos Association News

October 2011

by Liz Nash

The Brazos Association held its Fall Meeting on a beautiful fall day, October 15th, at **Friedens Church of Washington**. For those of you who have not been to this church, it overlooks the rolling land of Washington County, surrounded by country and farmland, very close to the historic first capital of Texas. The church property consists of the church building, the parsonage, the old schoolhouse owned and maintained by the church, and the lovely cemetery that is on the crest of a hill behind the church building. The Washington folks were gracious hosts, serving as greeters, providing breakfast snacks, and providing lunch. We thank them, along with **Pastor Greg Felder**, for their hospitality.

The highlights of the meeting were presentations by **Anne Wehrly** and moderator **Jerry Carpenter** about their time as South Central Conference delegates at General Synod in Tampa, Florida and the consecration of **Anna Deter** as a Licensed Minister in the Brazos Association. We saw a video and heard commentary about General Synod. Jerry and Anne shared about the spirit of delegates in speaking to issues and noted the vote to consolidate several national boards into one larger board – a move that saves money and streamlines the work of the wider church. They also shared about the welcome and installation of three new ministers of the five that serve in the Collegium that oversees the ministries of the UCC: **Rev. Bennett Guess, Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries; Rev. James Moos, Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministries; and Mark Clark, Associate General Minister.**

At our meeting, a very supportive and happy group from Friends came to celebrate **Anna Deter's** consecration. Deter, as she is known, completed a three year preparation process with a great deal of initiative and faithful, committed work. She is now the 8<sup>th</sup> Licensed Minister currently serving in the Brazos Association, adding to several others who have served or been trained here earlier and have gone on to serve elsewhere. Our Licensed Ministry program is a

great strength in our relatively small Association: perhaps unusual in the UCC in the number of committed and trained lay people who serve our churches as pastors, supply preachers, and educated leaders. As Deter was consecrated, we had all six Licensed Ministers who were able to be present come forward and give their personal words of wisdom, and they stood with her as we joined hands in a commissioning prayer.

We also heard a number of reports, had an update on our financial condition, adopted a budget, enjoyed the sharing of news from our churches, and received an offering to help with National Youth Event scholarships. **Larry Winkelmann**, our treasurer, noted the possibility that we could need additional donations from our churches depending on the number of applications for seminary student scholarships, although we do not know what the need is at this time.

We encourage our churches and youth to plan on attending the **National Youth Event** next summer, **July 10-13, 2012**, at Purdue University. We sent a large group from our Association last time, and we anticipate joining with others from the **South Central Conference** in bus transportation and fellowship as we make the journey together. I cannot emphasize enough how uplifting the experience was at the last **National Youth Event** --- it is worth the trip! The cost will be \$425 per person, which covers room, board, and registration. (See <http://www.ucc.org/calendar/national-youth-event-2012.html> for more details.) We will be making scholarship money available from our Association to help with the costs. I will be sharing more about how to register as we know more about our scholarship availability and what the transportation will be.

Blessings in Christ,  
Liz Nash  
Brazos Association Minister

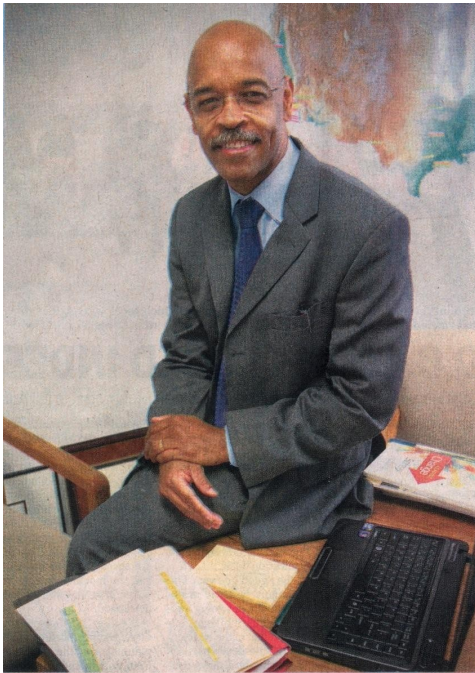
### EL SALVADOR TRIP REMINDER

The trip to **El Salvador** this year will happen on Feb. 4-11, 2012. Cost will be airfare (currently \$550) and an "on the ground" amount for food, lodging, and transportation (\$300-\$350). We will also need to fund the costs for our work project(s), which we hope to do from donations. The trip is sponsored by the **South Central Conference UCC**: it is the same trip we took last year. We will travel this time with folks from **First Congregational Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa**. We also anticipate having some folks along from other South Central Conference Churches.

Liz needs to know of serious interest by October 31 and will need to receive airfare by November 15 in order to buy plane tickets early for a lower fare. The group will fly together from either Dallas or Houston, depending on which is less expensive when the tickets are purchased. Contact Liz Nash with questions, for more information, or to let her know you are seriously interested in going. [lizknash@gmail.com](mailto:lizknash@gmail.com) 231-0045 (home), 799-2782 (cell).

**stan** - they'll be leaving February, 2012, to provide MEDEVAC support. He recently completed some high altitude flight training in Colorado in preparation. Carol is currently enjoying the seminars and lectures at the **University of Texas NOVA** program, and John is continuing to work until April, 2012.

Our retired pastor, **Yoshi Kaneda**, had a pleasant surprise while reading an article in the San Diego newspaper on September 27 on what works in education. He saw the picture of former member of our church in the 1990s, **Joe Johnson, Jr.**, in the article. After reading the article, Yoshi was able to contact Joe, and he and Setsuko met Joe for dinner at a nearby restaurant on October 13. The time flew by and the three of them wished they had more time to visit. Yoshi learned that Joe worked in Washington, D.C., for several years, and then in Columbus, Ohio, also for several years. Joe came back to San Diego in 2004, responding to San Diego State University's offer for a professorship in the education department. He is now **QUALCOMM Professor of Urban Education and Executive Director for the National Center for Urban School Transformation**.



Joe Johnson Jr. is executive director of the National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University that has given excellence awards to urban schools across the country. NELVIN C. CEPEDA - UT

Yoshi reports that Joe has remarried--his wife **Cindy** is in the same field of work. Cindy was also offered a professorship at SDSU and is perhaps busier than Joe, traveling to many countries to respond to the demands of her "educational facilities" expertise. Both of them had to go

through some difficult times caring for their mothers who had strokes and their after-effects. Now they both are enjoying a full professional life working to improve education. Setsuko and Yoshi are looking forward to meeting Cindy when they all get together for dinner. Joe's email address is jjohnson@mail.sdsu.edu.

**Mel and Pat Oakes** had a wonderful birthday visit with their daughter **Beth** (whose birthday it was), son-in-law **Eugene**, and grandchildren **Emily**, 10, and **Ethan**, 8, in **Iowa City** in mid-October. Activities included listening to Emily practice the violin and Ethan practice the piano, cooking, going to the Saturday farmers market, enjoying lunch out with Beth and Eugene on her birthday, attending the UCC church where the family goes, doing a bit of house-hunting, admiring the gorgeous furniture in the nearby **Amana Colonies**, breathing in cold air, and taking in the wonderful African art at the UI art museum.

**Dennis Schneider**, a member of the church more than 30 years ago, reports from **Tokyo** that he and Kazuko's daughter and son-in-law are doing very well with their new baby boy who was born March 31. **Takako** is back at work and she and her husband are balancing work and day care. They are hoping to get to Japan over the Christmas holidays. Dennis was able to make a trip to the states in the spring to see **Takako** and her family on the West coast and then on to Ohio to visit Dennis's 96-year-old father. Sadly, **Kazuko** has advanced Alzheimer's, but Dennis has figured out a way to bridge the conversation gap when he goes to visit. **Kazuko** has always loved music, so Dennis brings his MP3 player and 2 sets of earphones, so they sit and hold hands and listen to the music together. They are hoping that she will be able to respond when she sees her grandson for the first time. Dennis's closest COSTCO is still under repair from the **March 11** earthquake. The traffic ramp to the 2nd and 3rd floor parking garage collapsed killing one couple in a car. (This is in western Tokyo.) He had shopped there the day before and filled his gas tank at a discount self-serve station on the way home (COSTCO doesn't sell gasoline in Japan), so he actually was pretty well supplied for shortages of food and gasoline that occurred right after the quake. "His" COSTCO may re-open around the one-year mark. In the meantime, those who have their membership there got their membership extended free of charge. The next closest COSTCO to his place takes about 70 minutes to get to and it's hardly worth driving better than an hour each way, but he does want some things from there. Dennis enjoys using **Facebook** and **Skype** to see the baby when schedules permit.

## BORN TO BE WILD



Florence Castle, 95, with Bill Beardall's motorcycle. She needs to be sure to use her helmet. Florence once took a 60 mile motorcycle trip with a boyfriend of hers in Illinois!

Don't mess with Bill Beardall when he's riding his motorcycle to church!!

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### CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUSTIN, UCC Financial Pledge – 2011

Our church is a community of people responding to Jesus' call to follow him. Opening ourselves to and living in the spirit of God, we are engaged in the ongoing project of creating a community that liberates, heals, reconciles, pursues justice, and promotes peace.

Stewardship is the means through which we participate in the ongoing creation of this community. The more we discern, open ourselves to, and live in God's spirit, the more God's grace is manifested in and through us.

Our church budget reflects our financial commitment to the ongoing creation of this liberating, healing, reconciling, justice-seeking, peace-promoting community of Jesus' disciples that we call the Congregational Church of Austin, United Church of Christ.

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Discerning Jesus Christ's call to me while reflecting on my commitment to the on-going creation of the Congregational Church of Austin, UCC, and taking stock of my financial resources, I am prepared to pledge the following amount for the ongoing work of the church in 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_ per week

\_\_\_\_\_ per month

\_\_\_\_\_ per year

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Congregational Church of Austin  
408 West 23rd Street  
Austin, Texas 78705-5214

**Return Service Requested**

## **Deadline for December Visitor - Nov. 21**

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### **Calendar**

**November 3—Porch Lunch**

**November 12—Friendship Supper**

**November 13—Pledge Sunday**

**November 17—Porch Lunch**

**December 4— Convergence churches sacred music "concert" from 5-7 p.m. Location and details TBD.**

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