

THE VISITOR

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

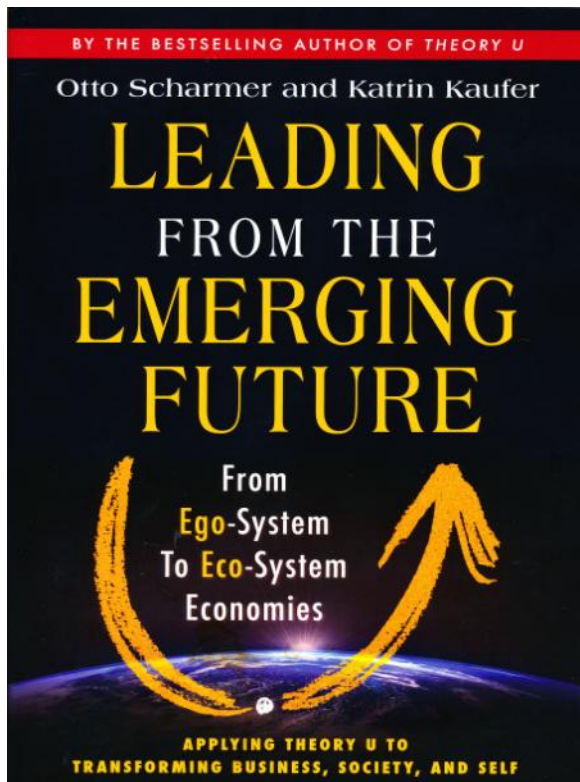
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Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt

Rev. John Towery, Pastor Emeritus



In my reflection on the day of our Annual Meeting, I addressed the topic of leadership in our church by quoting from the book, *Leading From the Emerging Future*, by **Otto Scharmer** and **Katrin Kaufer**: “We all know what the absence of leadership looks like: We collectively create results that nobody wants... The essence of leadership has always been about sensing and actualizing the future. It is about crossing the threshold and stepping into a new territory, into a future that is different from the past. The Indo-European word leadership, *lieth*, means ‘to go forth,’ ‘to cross a threshold,’ or ‘to die.’ Letting go often feels like dying. This deep process of leadership, of letting go and letting the new and unknown come, of dying and being reborn, probably has not changed much over the course of human history. The German poet, **Johan Wolfgang von Goethe** knew it well when he wrote, ‘And if you don’t know this dying and birth, you are merely a dreary guest on Earth.’”

As I noted in my reflection, Scharmer and Kaufer don’t write from a Christian perspective, but the issues they address in their book resonate in some powerful ways with Christian spirituality. Indeed, we can understand Christian spirituality as a disci-

pleanship path upon which Christ leads us into death and new life, a path that brings about a radical transformation of who we are in the world, thereby transforming the world itself.

I’ll be leading a discussion of *Leading from the Emerging Future* during Lent in March. I chose the book for several reasons: the authors address the profound challenges that we’re facing in our lives today, they offer interesting theories and insights into the deeper nature of these challenges, and they work with many businesses, governments, and non-governmental organizations attempting to respond to the challenges and to bring about positive change. In other words, the authors aren’t merely theorists spinning out a bunch of ideas, but change agents applying their ideas to real-life situations to see what kind of results they can produce. Finally, I chose the book because it does resonate with Christian spirituality, and I think it’s helpful for Christians to reflect on how we can actually effect change in the real world.

The authors address three great “divides” throughout the book: the ecological, the social, and the spiritual-cultural. The ecological divide is the experience of separation from the earth that results in environmental damage. The social divide is the experience of separation from other people that produces injustice and inequality. The spiritual-cultural divide is the experience of separation from our deepest aspiration that keeps us from creating a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. Because of these divides, we collectively create results in the world that we don’t want.

Taking it a bit further, the authors identify some “disconnects” in today’s “systems” that are producing results that we don’t want: A disconnect between Wall Street’s financial speculation and the real economy of meeting human needs, between the infinite growth imperative and the finite resources of Planet Earth, between the Haves and the Have-Nots, between institutional leadership and people, between gross domestic product and well-being, between governance and the voiceless in our systems, between actual ownership and best societal uses of property, between technology and real social needs.

The authors address these systemic issues and others from the perspective that *we* produce and reproduce these systems. Systems don’t just magically appear out in the world but arise as expressions of the human mind, heart, and will. What we often fail to do when trying to change the world *out there* is to look more deeply *within* at the minds, hearts, and wills from which these system arise and produce their results. The authors identify this phenomenon as our "blind spot." We pay far more attention to what's going on *out there* than we do to what's going on *in here*. In order to transform the systems operating *out* in the world, we must learn to collectively see how these systems are projections of what's *within* us.

While the book identifies many of the challenges we face on this planet, its ultimately a hopeful book. The authors share their experiences of working with people all over the world who’re looking deeply within themselves, listening with empathy to others, giving up old habitual ways of thinking, and allowing a new future to emerge through them. A future they characterize as being an “eco-system” rather than an “ego-system.” (Hint: more resonance with Christian spirituality here). I hope you can read the book and discuss it with me in Lent.

TOM

Austin’s Interfaith Environmental Network and IACT will be hosting Austin’s first ever **Preach-Off on Climate Change** on Sunday afternoon, February 16th. This event is designed to be a fun, interfaith community builder as well as a serious call to action on climate change, from a diverse range of Austin religious leaders.

The Preach-Off coincides with the national Interfaith Power & Light **Preach-In on Climate Change** (<http://www.preachin.org/>). It will be held on **Sunday, February 16, 2014, at Congregation Beth Israel**, beginning at 4pm (we will end no later than 6pm).

**Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary's 2014
Mid Winter Lectures
Monday, February 3 - Wednesday, February 5**

You're invited to the annual three-day event includes a lecture series featuring Christian blogger/author Rachel Held Evans, Dr. Scot McKnight, Dr. Samuel Wells, and Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner, as well as a home-coming event for Austin Seminary alumni. Over 200 people are expected to attend so come be part of this amazing event! For more information and to register [click here](#).

Church Leadership

Trustees Chair	John Goff
Deacons Chair	Jaime Hadley
Outreach Team	Marilyn Vaché Warinda Harris
Moderator	Barbara Burnham & Bill Beardall
Treasurer	Gail Christenson
Financial Secretary	Pam Tucker
Christian Education	Rachel Dietz
Coordinators	Martin Garrison
Clerk	Betty Bodman
Historian	Jaime Hadley
Web mistress	Sara Ross



2 John Deitz and Nodie Murphy practicing on special drums for the carol service on December 22nd.

Personals by Pat Oakes

On December 29th, avid gardener and lover of all things to do with nature, **Nancy Edison**, brought a special guest to church — a queen butterfly. That Sunday morning she had noticed that the butterfly was emerging from its chrysalis in her garden and was afraid that it was too cold for it to survive. She did the obvious thing and brought it to our warmer church garden. After church, folks were out in the garden watching to see if it would pump its wings up to their butterfly size, but it did not seem able to do so. Nancy seemed to feel that it was too late for the butterfly, but she gave the butterfly to **William, Alden**, and **Warinda Harris** to take home, cheer on, and monitor. They took it home, and after some time when it had not pumped its wings up, they took it to the **Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center** near their home to see if they could help. Warinda reports that everyone was very kind and interested. The last they saw of the butterfly, it had pumped its wings up and was flitting about in a garden where they placed it. Who knows if it made it to meet up with other queen butterflies, but it was certainly given every opportunity.

Almost 20 years ago **Martha (Roebuck)** and **Matt Wilding** moved from Austin to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with their 2-year-old son **Jake** when **Matt and Martha** finished library school. Those of us who have been in the church a while remember Jake well as a cheerful little boy. He is



There was an excellent turnout at Westminster Retirement Community to hear Jake Wilding sing I-r Fran and Rambie Briggs, Pat Oakes, Martha Wilding and her son Jake Wilding, Cathy Hubbs, Mel Oakes, and Nodie Murphy. The Wilding family was part of our church family about 18 years ago.

now a sophomore at **Iowa State University** (how time flies!) in **Ames, Iowa**, majoring in music education and voice. His grandmother, **Sarah Roebuck** recently moved into **Westminster** retirement community and Martha and Jake came for a visit. While here, Jake put on a wonderful vocal concert in the **Solarium at Westminster**. As a good mom of a musician, Martha spread the word and a good crowd showed up — more than sixty folks enjoyed a wonderful selection of songs accompanied by pianist **Maimy Fong**. The church was well represented and everyone enjoyed catching up with Martha and Jake.

In the good news/bad news department, our wonderful Sunday school teacher **Anna Kimberley** has been accepted into graduate school at **UTMB Galveston** to study for a master's degree in occupational therapy--that is the good news. The bad news (for us) is that Anna will be moving to **Galveston** in August to undertake her studies. You will be much missed, Anna!

The latest news **Nodie** and **Dennis Murphy** have: daughter-in-law **Faye** is continuing to pursue her degree in nursing, braving her twice-weekly commute to Syracuse, NY, from Fort Drum (a 90-minute drive in each direction when there's no snow or ice on the road), and **Ned** has decided to re-enlist for another two years. Faye expects to complete



"Our" queen butterfly's portrait taken by John Harris before its liberation at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Martin Garrison met with the **Brazos Association Committee on Ministry** on **Friday, January 17th**, and has been approved for an ecclesiastical council on April 6 which is the last step before ordination. Martin needs to receive a call to a church in order for his ordination to take place. This has been a long journey for Martin—congratulations! And good luck for the rest of the journey! 3

Brazos Association News
February
by Liz Nash

On Sunday, January 19th, **United Christian** had a full day of joy and farewell. The church combined its three worship services into one to say goodbye to their **Associate Minister Ken White** and his wife, Lucia. It was a service filled with laughter, tears, stories, inspiring music, and Ken's core beliefs and principles that have meant so much to that church, and particularly to the youth whose lives have been so affected by Ken's work. Then, he and Lucia left for their new home in **Burlington, Vermont**, where Ken will begin as the pastor of **College Street Congregational UCC** in early February.

The great joy of the day was the ordination of **Ken Ingram** in an afternoon service. Ken moved here as an in care/in discernment student from **Colorado**. He did a year long Clinical Pastoral Education program here through the **Seton Medical Center** network in Austin, and now works as a chaplain at the Heart Hospital of Austin. In all of that work, several of our area chaplains have come to know and respect him. **Rev. Stephanie Spitzer-Hanks**, who works with him at **Heart Hospital**, gave the message with a wonderful comparison of chaplaincy and a cartoon hero. It was a lovely service, and a real privilege to welcome Ken to ordained ministry in the Brazos Association.

Our **Annual Meeting** planning committee has met several times and is working to host an excellent, inspiring, and faith-filled gathering at **Camp Allen** (a beautiful Episcopalian camp and retreat center near Navasota), **Friday through Sunday, June 6-8**. **Linda Coats of Friends Congregational** is our hardworking committee chair. We already have a number of volunteers from our churches lined up to do important work, and we are looking for more. Particular areas of need at this point are people to help with the team receiving **Church World Service** school supply kits and **Back Bay Mission** hygiene kits, greeters/guides, and people to help with other registration-related activities. Contact Linda at linda_coats@msn.com if you would join us in this effort in the ways I have listed or in some other way. Our theme this year is "Caring for Creation" and our keynote speaker is **Rev. Jim Antal**, the **Massachusetts Conference Minister**. We hope you will be part of our work to welcome our Conference to the Bra-

zos Association.

We look forward also to our **Association Spring Meeting at St. Peter's Church of Coupland on April 6th**. We will have an Ecclesiastical Council there for **Martin Garrison** who was interviewed in January by our Church and Ministry Committee and recommended for ordination. And, it will be a chance for many of you to visit this lovely church and admire their new kitchen. Plan to come. Finally, I will be traveling with **Beth Gleason** and **Charlotte** Albert from our Association, along with six others from the wider UCC, to work in **Alegría, El Salvador** this week. We look forward to sharing about this always rich time with you.

Blessings in Christ

Liz Nash

Brazos Association Minister



The choir singing their anthem on Jan. 12th. L-r Don Miles, Barbara Burnham, Bill Mueller, Lucy Hanouille, Dennis Murphy, Nodie Murphy (director), Fran Briggs (partially obscured), Rambie Briggs, Katie Lemley, Jason Parkhill, Cathy Hubbs, Amy Harris (who is also our violinist), and Norma Hawes.



Faye and Ned Murphy in a photo taken at the Cavalry Military Ball, a formal affair with everyone in dress uniforms and evening gowns. As a Cavalry Scout in dress uniform, Ned is wearing the traditional black Stetson ("my cowboy hat").

her degree this August; Ned hopes to go for Special Forces Selection this summer.

Betty and Whit Bodman had both kids and their spouses in their house for Christmas, as well as Betty's sister and her husband and daughter— a full house. It was a wonderful time. Whit notes that it is so precious to see one's children and their spouses get along so well together. None of them, however, can yet beat Whit in backgammon. After they left, Whit's nephew, **Ben**, visited for a few days from New Hampshire. Next on the agenda—Whit headed off for two weeks in **Trinidad** with 12 students. They were learning about interfaith relations in Trinidad and the work of the Presbyterian Church there. **The Presbyterians of Trinidad**, about 2.5 % of the population, are mostly from South Asia, and many of them have religiously mixed families. It is very interesting. After Whit got back, he attended the board meeting of **Texas Impact** where he will take over as president. In preparation, he was reading "Gaveling for Idiots." In addition to his two courses at the seminary (one on scriptural narrative and the other on fundamentalism), he will also be teaching an evening course on world religions at the **Seminary of the Southwest**. Before classes at the seminary started, he squeezed in a little

surgery on his wrist to pin a couple bones together where a ligament has torn. Then, he is sure, it will be smooth and gentle sailing.

The choir has a bit of a new look these days (no—not new robes!). What is great to see is the age range now—**Katie Lemley** as the youngest at 16 and Cathy Hubbs as the senior singer at 91— and lots of good singers in between. As always, we appreciate the wonderful gift of music the choir brings us each Sunday under the leadership of **Nodie Murphy**.



The choir sang a wonderful song (Gaudette) for the beginning of the carol service on Dec. 22nd. They were accompanied by John Deitz and Nodie Murphy on special drums. I-r Barbara Burnham, Lucy Hanouille, Rambie Briggs, Katie Lemley, Norma Hawes, Jason Parkhill (soloist), and Cathy Hubbs.

The **Towery family** is experiencing a variety of emotions these days. Matriarch of the clan, **Eleanor**, who has inoperable breast cancer, has been placed on morphine to help manage the discomfort that she was feeling. Daughter **Mary Masters** was concerned that she would be unresponsive, but Mary reports that that is not the case. On a recent visit to **The Cottages at Chandler Creek** where Eleanor and John are residents—with hospice care on site, Mary had a good visit with her folks and they all enjoyed singing old songs together—and they knew all of the words. They tire easily, but enjoy notes and cards which you should send to Mary (109 D B Wood Road, Georgetown, Texas 78628) so that she can read the notes with them. Daughter **Sally Towery Johnson** (who lives in Massachusetts with her husband Tommy) continues to improve after her back surgery several months ago. Mary and Danny's son **Ricky** and his wife **Monica** are the proud parents of **Agnes** who turned 3 on Jan. 26th and **Clara** who is already walking at 9 months old. Everyone was excited to welcome **KC** and **Kendra Towery's** new baby boy—John and Eleanor's 6th great-grandchild and **Ches** and **Maggie Towery's** first grandchild—**Benjamin Chesley Towery**,

Continued from page 5

long. Benjamin fits right into the the Towerys' birthday schedules—Mary's is Jan 22, Danny's is the 23rd, cousin **Claudia Tarvin Whitehead** is the 24th, Benjamin's is the 25th, and cousin Agnes Masters' is the 26th. It will be birthday cake on the menu for a whole week.

Most of us approach the church from the San Antonio Street side, so folks may not have noticed the graffiti that now mars the two iconic murals in the **Renaissance Market** between the church and Guadalupe. The murals were created in the mid-1970s and have been periodically updated over the years. **The Austin American-Statesman** reported in a story on January 11 that vandals had spray painted/tagged both murals over several nights. The original murals took about six weeks each to paint and it is thought that the damage to the murals was done in just a few minutes. The University Co-Op paid "in the five figures" for the Texas mural about 10 years ago. Now the question is who (if anyone) will pay for the restoration. There had been an "unwritten" rule that no one would damage the murals, but clearly the vandals did not think about that.



Graffiti on the iconic Renaissance Market mural as seen from the entrance to the church.

Carol and Fred Scott have a new address: 4615 West 89th St., Prairie Village, Kansas 66207. Their phone numbers are the same: 913-766-3153 and Carol's cell 913-226-5822) Carol reports that it has been a rough move. Winter weather and their advanced ages not helpful (Carol's words!). The moves to and from Texas were easier, but they are delighted with the house, and the neighbors are very nice!

Former member **Carol** (working in California in recent years) and **Gary Barrett** (who lives in Austin, but travels on business to China frequently--and stops in **California** en route) enjoyed a wonderful trip to France last fall with sons **Whitney, Craig** and his wife **DeLan** and their son 6

Kai (who was 16 months old at the time). Among the sights they saw were the historic Roman ruins in **Nimes**.

Former member **Linda (Bulkeley)** and **Leland Morine** had a good year including some good trips. They enjoy travel around **California** (they live in the Bay area). In October they went to the **Orlando** area to visit **Lois Drachenbuerg** whose late husband married Linda and Leland in California some years ago. Lois was delighted to see them, of course. For who knows how long, Linda will be making her annual trek to north central Texas (Gainesville area) to see the **Bulkeley** land. Hopefully sooner, rather than later, Austin will be included in another visit. Let us know when you are coming, Linda, and Leland, and perhaps we can get Leland to sing us some Finnish songs in honor of Marie Scheel whose parents came over from Finland and settled in Hancock, Michigan, many years ago. **Marie**, who will celebrate her 100th birthday (!) on October 4th, was most interested to learn of Leland's singing of Finnish songs. She remembers making trips back home to Hancock and putting on vocal concerts of Finnish music.

Zona and Omer Galle, also former members, who now live in **Kansas**, are doing well. Their daughter-in-law **Sylvia** continues her work with **USAID** in Egypt. She and her husband **Karl** (who teaches at the American University of Cairo) live in an area of Cairo which is far from the areas prone to rioting, but it is still a concern. Both Karl and Sylvia were able to come to the States for the holidays. Daughter **Kristin** finished her latest interim pastoral assignment in **Conroe, Texas**, and is waiting for her next call. Kristin's husband **Brent**, also a pastor, continues at the **Brenham Presbyterian Church**. Brent's daughter **Rachel** is working on her Master's of Social Work at UT Austin, Kristin's daughter **Kaitlyn** is working for "Teach for America" in **Tulsa, Oklahoma**, and daughter **Mariah** is working on a double major in literature and political science at **TCU**.



It was great to see John and Carol Burlinson at church on Jan. 19th

Hill Country Ride for Aids

It's that time of year again—**Hill Country Ride for AIDS** preparation. "Preparation" means **George Hetrick, Robin Chapman, and Tom VandeStadt** are enduring strong shifting winds and wildly mercurial temperatures as they log miles on their bikes in order to complete the challenging HCRA course in April. "Preparation" also means fundraising. The HCRA is a fundraiser for a number of organizations in central Texas that provide support to people living with AIDS.

The Care Communities of Austin is one of those organizations. Our church now has two **Care Communities** "Care Teams," and George, Robin, and Tom will once again be riding on the Care Communities Cycling Team. If you'd like to support the fundraising efforts of George, Robin, or Tom, please go to hillcountryride.org and click the link for supporting a participant. Type in the name of the person you'd like to support and follow the instructions. If you prefer, you can write a check to Hill Country Ride for AIDS with the name of the participant you're supporting in the memo and give the check to Tom at church. He'll take care of the rest. George, Robin, and Tom thank you for the many years you've supported them in this effort, and for your continued support this year.



Zona and Omer Galle (right) with granddaughter Kaitlyn (center) and two of her friends who are working for "Teach for America" in the Tulsa area. This was Kaitlyn's birthday and Omer and Zona drove from their home in Kansas to meet her for a birthday lunch. Kaitlyn is working for Head Start in Tulsa.

Austin CROP Hunger Walk 2014

March 23rd Sunday

1:45 Registration 2:30 Step Off

Camp Mabry

2200 West 35th Street

Information packets are available with all the materials your organization needs to participate in the CROP Hunger Walk. Packets may be picked up from these locations. Please call or email to arrange a pick up time.

United Christian Church

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(512)218-8110 – diane@uccaustin.org

i-ACT

2921 E. 17th St., #3

(512)386-9145, ext 308 – dwilliams@interfaithtexas.org

CWS/CROP Office

6633 Highway E 290, Suite 108

(512)451-2062 – tx@cwsglobal.org

Capital Area Food Bank

8201 S. Congress

(9 am to 5 pm – no need to call ahead)

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

Return Service Requested

Deadline for March Visitor — February 21st

Happy Birthday!

4 Jonathan Carruthers	16 Nancy C. Brown
Megan Goff	Betty James
6 Mardie Oakes	17 John Horner
Holly Ann Horner	John Moore
Gail Christeson	18 Ned Murphy
7 Geneva Ross	19 Jamie Adams
8 Barbara Burnham	20 Whit Bodman
Lois Drachenberg	26 Ida M. Little
11 Valentino Herrera	29 Martha Wilding
13 Richard Jackson	