

THE VISITOR

June 2013

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt

Rev. John Towery, Pastor Emeritus

One of the things I love about **Luke's Gospel** is the way Luke highlights **Jesus'** prayer life. There's a definite pattern to Jesus' life in Luke's Gospel. Not only does Jesus repeatedly retreat to places of solitude to pray and then return to actively engage the world, prayer directly precedes each major turning point in Jesus' ministry. While the other gospels mention Jesus praying, Luke's Gospel highlights this particular pattern far more explicitly. The following is a thumbnail sketch of Jesus' prayer life in Luke's portrayal.



Jesus went to the **Jordan River** so John could baptize him. When he was baptized *and was praying*, the Holy Spirit descended upon him and a voice from heaven spoke, "you are my beloved Son; I am very pleased with you." Then the Holy Spirit led Jesus out to the wilderness, where he resisted powerful temptations. After many days and nights spent in solitude, Jesus returned to the place where he grew up, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus taught and healed in the synagogues of **Nazareth** and **Capernaum**. Then he healed Peter's mother of a high fever. The next day, *he retreated to a place of solitude, to be alone*, but people found him and asked him to return to Capernaum. Jesus said, "I must go to other cities to share the good news of God's Kingdom." While Jesus was in one of the cities, he healed a man with leprosy. Word spread quickly and big crowds of people seeking healing began to surround him. But Jesus often withdrew from the crowds to be by himself *to pray*.

Jesus continued healing people and telling them the Kingdom of God was at hand. He angered **Pharisees** by sharing meals with outcasts. One day, Jesus climbed a mountain and *prayed all night long*, then chose his twelve disciples. A crowd of sick people were waiting for Jesus down in the plain. Some simply reached out to touch him and were healed by the power radiating from him.

Jesus continued healing and teaching. He brought a dead man and a dead twelve-year-old girl back to life. One day, he went out to a place of solitude *to pray*, and he asked the disciples who they thought he was. They answered, "the Christ." He told them he would suffer and die, and that whoever followed him must carry their own cross. Then he took **Peter**, John and James to the top of a mountain *to pray*. A bright light radiated from his body, and a voice spoke saying, "this is my son, my chosen; listen to him."

The next day, Jesus came down from the mountain and began his journey to Jerusalem. Along the way, he continued healing people and speaking about the Kingdom of God. He debated with Pharisees, who became increasingly hostile toward him. One day, while *Jesus was praying*, his disciples said, "teach us to pray." Jesus said, pray like this: "Father, your name is holy. May your Kingdom come to earth. Give us our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we ourselves forgive everyone. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver from us harm. Your Kingdom is forever." Then he told

Continued on page 2

them, "if you seek God, you shall find God. Knock, and the door shall be opened."

He continued his journey to **Jerusalem**. As he got closer, he attracted bigger crowds, and by the time he reached the city gates a huge crowd was following him. He went to the **Temple**, overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and proclaimed that the house of God should be a house of prayer. The **High Priest** and the **Romans** plotted against him. Jesus went to Temple every day to teach and at night he went to the **Mt. of Olives** to pray.

During **Passover**, he shared a meal with his disciples, and told them the bread was his body and the cup the new covenant made through his blood. Then he went out to the Mt. Olives to pray. He wrestled with God, asking God to take this horrible suffering and death from him, but then he surrendered to God: "not my will, but your will be done."

One of his disciples betrayed him. When the authorities arrested him, the other disciples scattered in fear. The authorities crucified him. On the cross, Jesus cried out to God, "into your hands I commend my Spirit." Then he breathed his last breath and died. Three days later, the tomb in which they placed his body was empty.

In the fall, we're going to take a closer look at Jesus' prayer life. And at our own. More specifically, I'm going to lead an after-worship study group that takes a close look at the **Lord's Prayer**. We'll take it line-by-line in an effort to understand the prayer's meaning. We'll look at the use of words like "Father," "Heaven," and "debts." We'll look at contemporary alternative versions that use inclusive language. In the end, we'll each write our own personal version, drawing on the original meaning with contemporary words that resonate with us.

In preparation for this study, please pay close attention throughout the summer to the experience of praying the Lord's Prayer during worship. To what extent are you reciting a well-worn liturgy and to what extent are you *praying*? Which words and phrases are particularly meaningful to you, and which ones do you find difficult to use? Are there parts of the prayer you find difficult to understand, or that just don't make sense?

I hope you'll consider joining us in the fall, and that you'll pay close attention to our liturgical and prayerful use of the Lord's Prayer during worship.

TOM

World Refugee Day

The United Nations established **World Refugee Day** to recognize the courage, resilience, and strength of refugee families and individuals who have fled their home countries because of conflict and persecution. Austin, Texas will host its annual celebration of World Refugee Day on **Saturday, June 23, 2013, from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM at The Bullock Texas State History Museum** (1800 N. Congress Avenue). This event is sponsored by agencies in Austin, such as **Caritas of Austin, Refugee Services of Texas, Multicultural Refugee Coalition and, iACT**, and several others to educate the community and to celebrate refugees living in Austin and the surrounding areas.

A citizenship ceremony welcoming our newest American citizens will begin at 12 noon. There will be live music and performances by various refugee and local artists. Educational activities for everyone will focus on the refugee journey and other activities like mask-making, face painting, and beading will be available. A new addition to

this event will be storytelling from Africa. X8 Interactive Drumming (formerly known as ZaBoomBa) will close out the celebration with a drumming activity where attendees are encouraged to drum along and create their own music. **The Austin World Refugee Day** celebration is free and open to the public. Learn more by going to <http://interfaithtexas.org/>.

Church Leadership

Trustees Chair	John Goff
Deacons Chair	Joe McMillan
Christian Outreach Chair	Kevin Dietz
Moderator	Reuel Nash
Treasurer	David Ross
Financial Secretary	Steve Domingue
Clerk	Betty Bodman
Historian	Jaime Hadley
Web mistress	Sara Ross

Personals by Pat Oakes

The multi-talented **Nodie Murphy** did it again-- she organized a fabulous talent show on **May 17** which was enjoyed by more than 60 folks. The evening started with a delicious soup supper at 6 and by 7 everyone was ready for the show to start in the sanctuary. The kitchen wizards who provided soup were **Whit Bodman, Jaime Hadley, Ruth Koenig, Lynne Lemley, Nodie Murphy, Tommie Pinkard, and Sara Ross.** The Honorable **Lynne Lemley** served as Emcee, and her son **Jeffrey** was the bouncer (not needed, as it turned out). Pianist and safety net was the terrific **Jonathan Geer.**

One needs to understand that there are only two rules for the various acts--they should be family friendly--and less than three minutes long! The evening opened with **Jonathan Geer** playing a fast and complicated piece followed by **The Jugglers**, a women's choral ensemble directed by **Nodie** and including **Warinda Harris, Nancy Edison, Sara Ross, Cathy Hubbs, Norma Hawes, Katie and Lynne Lemley, Marilyn Vaché, Pat King, and Rebecca Ellis.** **Ruth Koenig** was next with an amusing story about her and her husband's experiences with Chinese currency during their year's stay in China some years ago. **Bill Beardall** and his guitar raised the rafters with his rendition of "Don't Get Around Much Any More." **Beth Placek** read a poem she had written about the joys of running--and then ran to lively music! **Amy Harris's** spoof of Broadway songs and the trials and tribulations of auditions was very well-received--especially her great high C. **Jeffrey Lemley** brought a selection of his architectural models (he is studying architecture at Texas A & M) and talked particularly about his zoo model. **Don and Sharon Brown** delighted the crowd with a sophisticated tango. Another choral ensemble, **The Polly Wolly Doodlers**, captivated the crowd with a lively number. Choristers included **Don Miles, Bill Mueller, Dennis Murphy, Barbara Burnham, Jason Parkhill** holding adorable one-year-old **Zoey, Rebecca Ellis, Pat King, Norma Hawes, Amy Harris, and Joe McMillan** (Joe reports that his chemo and radiation is going well and he only has a few more weeks to go). **Mel and Pat Oakes** walked up and down the aisle to festive wedding music played by Jonathan in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary which was on the 18th and Pat's successful knee replacement--no cane or walker was used! **Bill Phillips** read one of his evocative poems— "*Between the Dunes and Kitty Hawk.*" **Tess Howicz** brought a musical change of pace with her lively performance of "*Merrily We Roll Along*" on the recorder. **Harrison Tucker** did a great job singing the "Oompa Loompa Song" from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.* **Sister Savanna** and her friend **Cyrena Matingou** played a dynamic duo on the recorders. **Barbara Burnham**, true to her love of all things **Jane Austen**, read a great passage



Non-Sailors Singing at the May Talent Show. Choristers left to right Don Miles, Bill Mueller, Dennis Murphy, Zoey and her dad Jason Parkhill, Joe McMillan, Sara Ross and Norma Hawes with Nodie Murphy directing.

from *Sense and Sensibility*. Another choral number was presented by *Non-Sailors Singing*. Choristers included **Don Miles, Bill Mueller, Dennis Murphy, Zoey** and her dad **Jason Parkhill, Joe McMillan, Sara Ross** and **Norma Hawes**—directed by **Nodie Murphy.** **Don Miles** then did an original reading on the joys of teaching young children. **Pat King, Rebecca Ellis, and Nodie** had the audience humming with their selection of "*How Can I keep from Singing.*" **Whit Bodman** had the group roaring with his nautical lingo-infused talk about the joys of sailing. **Sara Ross** sang and accompanied herself on the guitar to George Gershwin's "*Summertime.*" **Chester Rosson** read a dramatic poem in German. Keeping up with the foreign language trend, **Ellie Nash** taught the group affectionate terms in French. **Dave Ross** dedicated his reading of "*Tommy*" by **Rudyard Kipling** to his mother and to all of the soldiers who have given their lives for liberty. **Katie Lemley and Emily Howicz** did another lively variation of their crowd-pleaser, "*The Duck Song.*" **Norma Hawes** did the quietest whistling version of "Simple Gifts" that you will ever hear! **Tommie Pinkard** finished out the acts using her talents as an editor from her years at **Texas Highways** and wrote a superb press release about the evening. The audience joined **Nodie** in singing the grand finale—"If You're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands." Start thinking ahead for what you would like to do for the next talent show—it is very low key and lots of fun for everyone.

Whit Bodman finally finished a casket for the liturgy lab at the seminary. It was all ready for a class of students to throw dirt on it, one after another. The liturgy lab is a room with audiovisual equipment and church furnishings

that enable the students to practice baptisms, communion, funerals, preaching and all the motions and presence of presiding at worship. A graduate who is a fine craftsman and artist made the elegant communion table, which meant



Whit Bodman's coffin which he made for the Austin Presbyterian Seminary.

that Whit's small addition could not be a piece of junk. Whit says that given his limited skills, it took longer than it should have. Naturally, the coffin could not be left empty. In it, lying in quiet repose, is an inflatable carpool buddy, no doubt repenting for any past or future deceits in the HOV lane. **Whit and Betty** then headed up to New York City to celebrate their daughter **Elizabeth's** birthday before Betty begins her summer semester. Whit will be preparing to teach a course in late June entitled "Pilgrims, Pagans, and Pentecostals," a survey of American pluralism.



Don Miles and Paco Gallástago, producer of the new movie, "Cinco de Mayo, La Batalla."

Don Miles celebrated *Cinco de Mayo* this year by attending a **Mexic-Arte Museum** dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel, where he met the producer of the new movie, "Cinco de Mayo, La Batalla." He is **Paco Gallástago**, and he hosted Don for the Texas premiere of the movie at the **State Theatre** on Tuesday, May 7. It's all in Spanish, with English subtitles and lots of rifle and cannon fire. Don gave him a copy of his new novel, *Cinco de Mayo, the Novel*. Don celebrated his 77th birthday on May 16. In early June he was driving to Washington, D.C., for the June 7th wedding of his eldest granddaughter, Cecelia Miles. Her parents, Richard and Phoebe Miles, have made guest appearances in our choir a couple of times in recent years.



Annie Nash at her graduation from Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado on May 11th.

Annie Nash graduated May 11 from **Naropa University** in Boulder, Colorado with a BFA in Performance, which is a blend of drama, dance, and voice. It was a joyous graduation of a boisterous, close-knit community of students in this unusual school that is grounded in contemplative education with a strong Buddhist influence. It has been a terrific place for her. Her thesis ensemble performance piece, presented in December, was "*Ha, Ha, Hysteria*." She has a performance piece accepted into the Boulder Fringe Festival early next fall. **Liz, Reuel, Ellie, and Liz's dad, David Kultgen**, were there for the celebration, while Becky stayed in the northeast to finish the semester at Landmark College in Vermont. Congratulations, Annie! Sadly, Liz's dad, **David Kultgen**, died suddenly at his home in Waco on Sunday afternoon, May 19th, Reuel and Liz's 36th wedding anniversary and the day before Liz was to leave on a trip to Israel.

Dave and Sara Ross and **Marie Scheel** enjoyed a lovely outing to the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** on **May 11**. **Marie**, 98, was the choir director at the church for many years. She gets around with a walker and with



Dave and Sara Ross and Marie Scheel enjoyed a lovely outing to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on May 11.

Dave and Sara's help was able to enjoy the beautiful wildflowers and park. All three enjoyed a delicious lunch at the **Wildflower Center**.

Ruth Koenig, one of our newer members, and her husband went to China to teach conversational English in the early 1990s. *The Red Blackboard: An American Teacher in China* is her account of their year living in Sichuan Province and teaching at the Chengdu College of Geology. She is donating a copy of her book to the church library for anyone who might be interested in learning about their experience. She says, "As a traveler, I had always been frustrated at 'having to eat and run' when visiting fascinating places. Being able to live, teach, and travel, and really get to know people was like a dream come true when my husband and I spent a year in China." She admits that "although fascinating, it was not always an easy year. Coping with the lack of heat, of familiar foods, political monitors in the classroom, and few teaching materials sometimes made teaching a nightmare. It was the first time in my life I had ever written, 'Spitting in the classroom will not be permitted' on my class syllabus." Traveling in a country with woefully inadequate facilities and resources was frustrating and maddening. Venturing out without knowing the language created some awkward, embarrassing, and sometimes humorous situations. In one instance, some enterprising salesman inveigled her husband into posing for pictures, prominently holding up some sample commercial products. When the pictures and sample brochures arrived later, they discovered that he seemed to be endorsing a feminine hygiene product. She concludes, "Nevertheless, as we came to know our Chinese students, friends, and colleagues who shared their lives and experiences, we gained a new understanding of courage and an appreciation for the endurance of the human spirit, and the natural sweetness of the Chinese people."

Former pastor of this church. **Yoshi Kaneda**, was pleased to be present as one of two founding members of the **San Diego Partnership Churches** (which was organized on March 8, 1983). Recognition was given at the **Celebrating Thirty Years of Togetherness** gathering on April 30, 2013, with **Rev. Geoffrey Black, UCC President**, as key-note. The purpose of Partnership Churches was to "promote understanding through shared activities" among five diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural churches in urban San Diego. Initially there were twenty Partnership Churches groups in the UCC family. The San Diego group is the only one that is still going strong in the whole nation. At the annual gathering of **Southern California/Nevada Conference in Carson City**, Yoshi was among twelve clergy persons who marked his 50th anniversary of ordination. He was given a certificate which celebrates his long and faithful pastoral service on May 11. Yoshi says, "Gee, I now belong to a UCC antique shop!"

Marilyn Gaddis and George Carruthers' granddaughter, **Allison Carruthers**, will graduate from **Vandegrift High School** in June. She will be attending **Baylor University** in the fall and has received a scholarship from Baylor.

The **Tapestry** concert went very well and **Lucy Hanouille** enjoyed having a solo. She was then invited to help the auditioned choir (Loose Threads) sing **Dvorak's Gloria** from the *Mass in D* on Mother's Day. Lucy was delighted to honor her mother by singing and to help pay Tapestry's rent to use St. Matthew's Episcopal Church for the concerts.

Reuel Nash was getting his video camera ready to use for something and noticed he still had the video from the Talent Show for the Convergence Churches in the camera. Reuel has put it on YouTube for everyone to enjoy. The video includes performances by **Bill Beardall, Betty Appel, Bill Phillips, and Fran and Rambie Briggs**. Click on this link and enjoy the show. <http://youtu.be/e4DN0OoU8JE>

Felicia and Eliot Scott are finally loving the weather in **Rhode Island**, although not the blooms and allergies it brings for Felicia! **Skye** has entered a modeling contest, the voting part is just for fun (to try to win accommodations in LA) but the company still selects other children for the final competition taking place in July in LA (top 15 then they do a little runway show). It is a cute kid clothing company that sells recycled high-end kid clothing, which they won't be buying:). They are looking for their next cover girl/boy.

Here is the link: spoiledfashionz.com If you have time to vote (you can vote once daily through early July). Scroll to the bottom and you should see **Skye's** photo listed under daiz125.

Outreach Teams Forming

The Outreach Board is dead! Long live the Outreach Board!

Our congregation is trying out a new way to do the work of the **Outreach Board**, by dissolving it and asking all of us to take part in the activities that most interest us.

Perhaps you want to do something about homelessness and affordable housing. Contact **Whit Bodman**, who heads up our **Austin Interfaith** team. Maybe you want work directly with the homeless; in that case, contact **John Goff** or **Jo Jensen** about volunteering for freeze night shelter, Christmas dinner, or front porch lunches.

If you are **Green**, (or want to be more Green) join the **Green Team** as it helps us to make our church and our own homes and lifestyles more sustainable. There's no official coordinator yet, but you could let one of us know and we will get you hooked into that group.

Other places you may choose to serve: with **Bill Beardall** on immigration reform, with **Kevin Dietz** on coffee sales, with **Beth Gleason** on support for a **Christian Palestinian** school, with **Josh Sabik** and **Marilyn Vaché** on creating a **Housing Co-op**, with **Liz Nash** to volunteer with **Micah 6**, or with **Jaime Hadley** to volunteer as a member of a **Care Team**.

And maybe you're even more excited about some other work that needs doing. Let us know your plans and we'll help you get started

Warinda Harris-Johnson and Marilyn Vaché
Outreach Coordinators

Spirituality Book Club

iACT **invites** you to share your love of reading and interfaith exploration in a respectful circle of inquiry.

Time: 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Book People, 603 N Lamar Blvd

Next Meeting: Minimalism: Live a Meaningful Life

Holly Swift hosts the iACT Spirituality Book Club, a forum for discussing both classic and contemporary texts that address the intersections of faith and public life. The Spirituality Book Club is open to the community and suggestions for works to read and discuss in the coming months are always welcome.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Holly at (512) 897-0269 or e-mail hollyswift@gmail.com.

In Case You Missed It - Spring Retreat at Slumber Falls Camp by Marilyn Vaché

The **Guadalupe River**. Learning more about each other. Sharing our connection to Earth and the cosmos. Learning about the theology of love for God's presence in our world.

During the first weekend in **May** we gathered in **New Braunfels** for two days. Friday night our pastor, **Tom VandeStadt**, brought the film "**The Thin Red Line**" by **Terrence Malick**, and through the experience of American GI's in Guadalcanal we ourselves experienced questions of life, death, loyalty, choice, and our place in the web of life.

"**Exploring Earth as a Sacrament**" on Saturday morning included a trip to the riverside to "re-covenant" our baptisms. Drawing on writings from **Sallie McFague**, **Larry Rasmussen**, **John Hart**, and **Jay McDaniel**, Tom talked about creation and transcendence. Our place on earth and in its elements, especially water, were discussed with readings from **Larry Rasmussen**, **David Abrams**, and **Jonathan Edwards**. (Some of you may remember that Jonathan Edwards is the preacher who emphasized the beauty of God's creation in the sensation of taste -- and Tom brought some crackers and jams for us to join in the celebration!)

Saturday afternoon included lunch together and time to explore the grounds of the camp. The ideas of **Karl Peters** helped us visualize ourselves as part of a tapestry of culture and biology, and we read **John Hart's** meditation on ourselves as part of a commons, with mutual sacred duties. We drew on those ideas and the work of **Cynthia Moe-Lobeda**, **Jonathan Edwards**, and **John O'Donahue** to reflect on Tom's questions about how we can be in touch with the tragedies and limits of life while at the same time see a vision of our individual and corporate lives, living more sacramentally, intentionally, in holy communion with others and with the Earth.

The end of the day saw us in front of the outdoor altar near our cabins, where each of us placed items that symbolized our relationship to earth and our heritage — a bird's nest, a walking stick, photographs, a seashell, a plant — many items that touched us and revealed the love and longing we have for Communion.

Brazos Association News

June

by Liz Nash

This month, we join **Lyons Evangelical and Friedens in Gay Hill** in welcoming **Darrin Holub** as their pastor. **Darrin** comes to them from Christ UCC in Cypress, and is a former pastor at Evangelical and Friedens. We wish him them many blessings as he returns.

Two of our Brazos Association ministers have recently been honored. Congratulations to **Dan DeLeon**, pastor of Friends Congregational in College Station. On April 24, Dan DeLeon received the **Phyllis R. Frye Advocacy Award** for showing leadership in the advancement of **GLBTI** civil rights from the **Texas A&M Department of Multicultural Services**. **Jo Jensen**, chaplain at the **Shivers Cancer Center in the Seton Healthcare Network**, was awarded the **Dorothy Day Prize** in Pastoral Care and Counseling from the Graduate Theological Foundation for her Doctor of Ministry project, **“The Be-Attitudes of Chaplaincy.”** As part of D. Min. degree she completed this spring, she was enrolled in a joint program with the **University of Oxford in Oxford, England**. Jo is coming to us with several years experience as a Catholic chaplain and is a member in discernment (in care) in our Association. We rejoice with Dan and Jo at these marvelous recognitions.

During the celebration of **John Sumner’s** ministry on his last Sunday at **St. Peter’s Church of Coupland**, the church sent John off with a dedication of their new kitchen and fellowship hall. After careful planning and fundraising, the foundation has been repaired, a new and large kitchen has replaced the stage, and they have an expanded

AmeriCorps **VISTA** with **Texas Impact** is working to inform local faith-based groups of a free social service program being offered through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Community Partner Program. The program focuses on connecting low income people in our congregation and community with social services. Their coordinator is hoping to involve Congregational Church of Austin in the program. This would be a great opportunity to dovetail with other outreach activities of CCA, such as **Micah 6** and **LifeWorks Street Outreach**.

Here is the link to the Texas Impact Community Partners Program webpage for more information.

<http://www.texasimpact.org/content/join-community-partners-program-today> 7

fellowship hall, new meeting room, new nursery, and other nice additions. It is a lovely addition to their church that will expand their ministry.

I will be a delegate representing the Brazos Association, along with **Anne Wehrly** of **Friends Congregational Church**, at the UCC General Synod in Long Beach at the end of June. We will be voting on a number of resolutions including exploration of revised conference boundaries, addressing the climate change by divestment from carbon based companies, and immigration reform. We are also looking forward to great fellowship, worship, and program that strengthens our covenant relationships in the UCC. More information about General Synod can be found at <http://www.ucc.org/synod/>

Finally, I encourage you to join us for our Brazos Association **Back Bay Mission** trip, December 1-7. A non refundable deposit for \$125 per person is due September 15 to cover our program and lodging at Back Bay. Total cost, including food and transportation by carpool, should be \$300 to \$350. Checks should be made out to the Brazos Association and mailed to me at 9712 Llano Estacado, Austin, TX 78759. Detailed printed information went to our Executive Board Members at our recent meeting. If you would like a copy, please email me at [liz-knash@gmail.com](mailto:liz-<u>knash@gmail.com</u>).

Blessings in Christ,

Liz Nash

Brazos Association Minister

The Congregational Church of Austin
408 West 23rd Street
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Return Service Requested

Deadline for July/August Visitor — June 21

June Birthdays

Happy Birthday to the following
CCA members and friends:

- 2 Ches Towery
- 4 Stephanie Phillips
- 6 Debbie Appel-Knowlton
- 8 Katy Phillips & Maggie Towery
- 11 Cheryl Appel & Jonathan Briggs
- 14 Whitney Barrett & Murphy Putz
- 16 Nodie Murphy
- 17 Karl Putz
- 20 Emily Howicz
- 26 Garry Cole
- 27 Marilyn Gaddis
- 28 Pat Oakes & Vic Appel

The Red Bench:
Interfaith Conversations that Matter is dialogue program centered on moderated small group discussions that are genuinely respectful and safe. No one has to be an expert – individual participants are invited to share from their personal experiences and listen with their hearts.



The Red Bench
interfaith Conversations that Matter

The next meeting is on June 18—Education: What is Education For? Does education have a moral purpose, or is it merely about training for a job or a career? What do we expect from our educational systems?

The Red Bench meets at the “Family Life Center” of First United Methodist Church at 1300 Lavaca Street in downtown Austin. A light meal is served from 6:30-7:00 PM and the conversation runs from 7:00-8:30 PM.