

THE VISITOR

June 2017

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt
(on sabbatical)

Interim Pastor: Rev. Amelia Fulbright



Welcoming scenario as you go in near the end of the main street entrance to SYM.

Art Group time. About a half dozen folks were seated at a table, drawing and coloring. Some people were wandering in and out of the kitchen, eating and talking. Two

Well, since Tom's away on sabbatical and out of the newsletter-article-writing business for a spell, we thought we'd give you a peep at some of what's going on in our basement with Street Youth Ministry! Just some brief history: Terry Cole started Street Youth Ministry in 2008 to serve the needs of street-dependent young people (the average age of their clients is 23), and the organization became an independent Texas non-profit in 2014. They started renting the church's basement and 3rd floor of the Towery Wing in January 2017. You can read more about them on their web-site, www.streethyouthministry.org.

When I arrived to take a few pictures and maybe get some feedback from clients being served, it was Art Group time. About a



It's Art Group time: also never too late for a bite to eat!



Donations of clothing and other items are neatly organized just right of the main entrance area to SYM.

volunteers were sorting through a pile of clothing. Relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Some of the art-group participants agreed to say something about what the program means to them. Excerpts from their comments to me follow.

Geronimo Louis Mendez: "This place is supposed to represent unity, peace, helpfulness, and expressing oneself." Armando R. Nava: "I am grateful for the resources available to me as a homeless veteran. I appreciate knowing that I have had the ability to volunteer with Terry in the past to help homeless friends of mine.

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Volunteers sort donated clothing; clients take a nap.

I am content that now years later I have the ability to come to him as I seek to reestablish myself as a homeless veteran.” Evan Pinkston: “It means a lot to me staff takes time out for me from their busy day. We could really use more staff down here—sometimes people get frustrated and walk out. In this place we require peace: without the peace, that brings chaos; chaos brings drama; drama brings jail time.” Manson: “This place gives a reassurance of resources kind of like YMCA; you get away from hot sun, fear, stress. It gives you faith that everything will be OK; I can't really explain it—like if you go to the ARCH, you get the feeling that it's dirty or something; if you come here, the food's good, people are accepting, it's not druggy at all like the ARCH.” Raven: “Terry Cole is an awesome man, and I appreciate everything him and his affiliates have done for me.”

I then spoke with a volunteer, Jean Brender, a member of Covenant Presbyterian and retired Texas A & M professor, who's been volunteering with SYM at least once a week for a couple of hours, for a little over two years. She has a soft spot in her heart for young people who've had a hard beginning; for her, this work is just part of “loving our neighbors as ourselves.”

I've also talked with Darvin Tan, who has worked as a missionary with SYM since early 2016. Darvin describes many SYM youth clients as having been formerly in the foster care system and not having positive, stable relationships with their parents. “A lot of our clients were angry or disillusioned with churches and Christians due to past disappointments, hurts and rejection. Some have unresolved anger, while a few are struggling with mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, paranoid delusion, and suicidal thought.” Darvin considers that being able to rent space in our basement and third floor have certainly improved the effectiveness of the services SYM seeks to provide: “We used to be a mobile ministry, where we had to be at different locations every day (sometimes even 2 places in one day). Having a more ‘permanent’ location really helps, as street youth no longer need to memorize where we are at any given day. It also enables us to expand our ministry in ways that were not possible before, such as having more time for guidance counseling sessions, etc. So I really want to thank the Church for this beautiful partnership in providing the space to serve the street youth of Austin, and may all the glory be for Christ, now and forever.”



Personals

by Pat Oakes

Sunday, May 21st, was a day of celebration as we welcomed five new members into the church. Keith and Darcy Beresheim moved to Austin in November, 2015, from the Chicago, IL area. They met 7 years ago and married 2 years later. They both earned their undergraduate degrees at the University of Illinois. Keith continued his education at the same university with a Master's degree in Finance/Accounting. Darcy continued her education attending an optometry school in Illinois. They enjoy the outdoors, especially in and on the water with their kayak and paddle board... although Keith has doubts that he will perfect the paddle board! Faye and Andy Dierksen moved here from Chadron, Nebraska, a little over a year ago. Andy, after working for Reflections Remodel for a year, has established his own home repair and renovations company—Handy Andy. His e-mail for inquiries is andrewdierksen@gmail.com. Faye works as an executive legal assistant for the law office of Hubert Bell, Jr., and graduated with her Master's of Science in Organizational Management in December.



5/21/17--Five new members!! I-r Keith and Darcy Beresheim, Andy and Faye Dierksen, and Amelia Fulbright

Our 5th new member is Amelia Fulbright—most of us know Amelia already as she has been the director of the Labyrinth Student Ministry program which at present has 5 five supporting congregations—CCoA, University Baptist, University Christian, First Baptist, and Metropolitan Community Church-Austin. Her husband Jonathan Zercher is a business systems analyst in the IT department at Yeti Coolers. 3

Their daughter Vivienne is almost 2 1/2. They use the French spelling of her name, but the regular English pronunciation. Amelia did her undergraduate work at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, and then completed her Master's of Divinity at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Her Twitter bio says that she is "fond of feminist theology, bluegrass music, and monastics," which she says is a pretty good summary of her. We are delighted to report that Amelia will be filling in for Tom while he is on sabbatical June-August. We are all looking forward to getting to know her better. Welcome to all our new members!



Distinguished Engineering Graduate,
Dr. Pam Tucker

Congratulations to Pam Tucker who, along with two others, was inducted into the Oklahoma University Gallogly College of Engineering Distinguished Graduates Society on Saturday, May 13. There are only 103 people in this group from all of OU engineering graduates (many are

deceased) since they started the program 30 years ago. Pam noted that she was honored and humbled by this. She certainly felt a bit 'outclassed' as many of the people in this group have been her mentors and dear friends. They were honored with a brunch where they gave short speeches and then they were the center of attention for the College of Engineering graduation. They marched out with the Dean in their regalia and he went through each of their bios for the graduating class of about 450 and the crowd in attendance. They sat front and center with the Dean and professors for the ceremony. Alison was able to go

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Heart of Texas Association News

June

by Liz Nash

Faith UCC in New Braunfels welcomed our Association for our spring meeting on Sunday afternoon, April 23rd. We had good attendance from most of our churches, and shared a warm spirit. After an opening worship led by Scott Martin and Ralph Ludwig that lifted up Earth Day, we went on to matters of business and fellowship. This meeting, we spent time hearing from three of our ministers. We welcomed our new Director of Outdoor Minister, Jeremy Albers, for the first time. Jeremy shared his vision and the new initiatives being pursued at the camp, as well as updating us on the ongoing camping program. Designated Conference Minister Don Longbottom talked to us about his priorities for ministry in the South Central Conference as we prepare to vote on calling him to be the settled Conference Minister at the SCC Annual Meeting. Nikki Stahl, who is one of our Association representatives on the Conference Board of Directors, discussed the proposed changes to the Conference Constitution and By Laws. These documents have not been revised and updated for a number of years, and a hard working committee has them ready for a vote at the SCC Annual Meeting.

In our business meeting, we had an important discussion and vote regarding Association church clusters and how to locate our spring and fall meetings. Our Association Executive Board has been trying to come up with a way to rotate the hosting of meetings in such a way that we get to each area, that we pay attention to the amount of driving people have to do to attend meetings with the expanded distances since the South Texas and Brazos Associations merged, and that we encourage churches who do not host (perhaps because of distance) to help those who do host. We also have wanted to give the choice about where our meetings are held over to the churches. The group present voted to have three clusters of churches in the Heart of Texas Association for purposes of hosting meetings, as well as to encourage these churches to have fellowship and shared activities as they decide to do so. Each cluster would decide which church would host the Association meeting when it is their

cluster's turn to do so, and we encourage the other churches in the cluster to then help the host church with meals and logistics. The clusters are South Texas, the Austin area, and the Brazos Valley. We will rotate among these clusters for each meeting. We also decided that every other meeting (which would currently be each fall), the meeting would be held in the Austin area due to its more central location. We, of course, will see how this works over time and adjust as needed and wanted by the churches of the Association. I will be sending out an email to the churches to clarify how this will work and which churches are in which clusters.

One other highlight of the meeting was to honor Glen Schoeneberg and Gerry Metzger for their long time of service to their churches, to the wider church, and to the wider communities where they live. Glen retires this month from St. John's in Burton, and Gerry retired from Bethany Congregational in San Antonio last December. Each was presented with a tree to plant to symbolize that the seeds they have planted in Christ's ministry will continue to grow for many years. Our prayers of gratitude and of blessings go with each of them as they start this new time in their lives.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Church Leadership

Trustee Chair	Don Brown
Deacons Chair	Betty Bodman
Outreach Team	Whit Bodman
Moderator	John Goff
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Pam Tucker
Christian Education	Rachel Dietz, Lynne Lemley
Youth Sunday School	
Coordinator	John Burlinson
Clerk	Jaime Hadley
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmistresses:	Shannon Quisenberry, Sara Ross
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

Personals (continued)

by Pat Oakes

and was recognized. The kids were scheduled to go with them, but both had final tournaments: Harrison for soccer and Savanna for ultimate Frisbee, so Pam and Alison made arrangements for them to stay with friends. Pam would have loved to have them with them, but she thinks they certainly would have been bored.

There was no service at our church on Sunday, May 7th. We were all in the congregation at University Baptist Church along with many others from the Baptist church and University Christian Church for a wonderful Youth Sunday service.



5/7/17 2nd from the right, back row--Alden Harris, right--Savanna Tucker, 2nd row from the back Harrison Tucker, 2nd from the right--the youth section of the choir for Youth Sunday, University Baptist (back three rows)

Jaime Hadley stayed at our church to snag anyone who had not gotten the message about the change in location. The three pastors, Larry Bethune (University Baptist), Charles Kutz-Marks (University Christian) and our own Tom VandeStadt introduced themselves and talked about this wonderful joint youth program which has been in existence for a number of years. The youth from the 3 churches plus our trio and the 3 church choirs joined together to create a wonderful worship experience. Our youth included Alden Harris, Harrison Tucker, and Savanna Tucker. Many thanks to Reuel Nash who is our church's coordinator for the group. Following the service, a delicious light lunch was served.

Debby Kohrt reports that the Smiles International Foundation once again sponsored a smiles surgical mission in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, this past April. There was a wonderful group of doctors and nurses who gathered: some old ac-



4/17 Before shot of child having SMILE surgery:

Debby Kohrt on the left

quaintances and some new. They operated on 40 patients over 3 1/2 days. The group is so thankful for their Cabo Rotary Club friends housing them in a beautiful hotel and providing them breakfast and lunch during their working hours. Debby feels so honored to be part of this wonderful mission! Their next mission is in October, 2017.



4/2017 Debby Kohrt, middle row, 3rd from the right, with her Smiles co-workers in Cabo San Lucas

We have all been missing Jonathan Geer, our fabulous pianist with the trio. He certainly has a good excuse. First he was in Norway to visit the **Owlboy** video game team. Jonathan wrote the musical score for the video game he had been working on for almost a decade with a very tiny team in Norway. Three of them are in Norway and 1 is in Canada. Then there was Jonathan in Texas... so just 5 people total. During the course of developing the game, Jonathan told them that if they ever actually finished it (he had his doubts at times!) that he would come visit them in Norway. They finally released **Owlboy** Nov. 1st last year and Jonathan followed through with his threat. The game has been really successful and it was fun for him and his partner Roberto Hernandez to finally be able to visit them overseas. They flew into Copenhagen, took a bus to Oslo... a train to Bergen and then a short flight to Stockholm. Then they flew out of Stockholm back to Austin. It was a very full and fun trip! Second, very shortly after his return to Austin, Jonathan was heading to Japan for a week.



5/14/17
Zach, Atlas, and Liz Hawver celebrating Atlas's baptism after church on Mother's Day

In the January, 2016, meeting of our Discipleship Group, Marilyn Vaché took a vow to understand the meaning of love, and she came a little closer to that goal when eHarmony+ found a match for her in the rural wooded hills of Connecticut. She and John have been long-distance dating for the last year, with some romantic get-aways to New York, Sedona, Fredericksburg, and Key West, and she will be moving in



Marilyn Vaché with her farewell gift from the congregation

June. (He built a home there and is not about to leave it!) She will be sad to leave CCoA and her practice, but looks forward to growing her new relationship and discovering New England. She'll also be closer to her daughter Olivia and future son-in-law Matthew in Boston. She and John also look forward to attending

Olivia and Matt's wedding in Iceland in August. 2016 was quite a year, and 2017 promises to be even more exciting. For a farewell gift, the Deacons presented Marilyn with a framed and matted photograph with the flowered Easter cross, a tradition she brought to the church when she came some years ago. Members of the congregations signed their names on the matte. We will certainly miss you, Marilyn!!

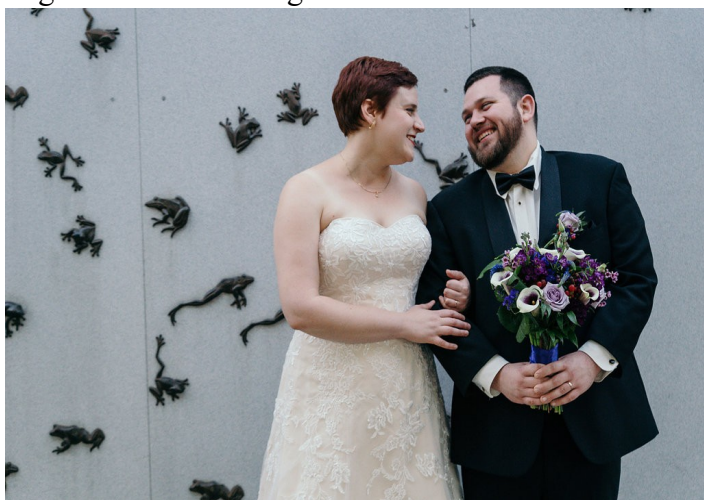


5/17 Jonathan Geer (left) in Kyoto, Japan, for a video conference

This was, again, an **Owlboy** trip. There was a big video game conference there called BitSummit that the **Owlboy** team was attending. Fortunately the conference was only Saturday and Sunday so they had the rest of the week for exploring in Kyoto. Check out the Web site to learn more about **Owlboy**--<http://www.ign.com/articles/2016/11/03/owlboy-review>.

The church celebrated the baptism of Atlas Hawver, son of Liz and Zach Hawver, on Mother's Day. The congregation was delighted when Atlas started responding by saying the vows his parents were reciting.

Former choir members Hannah Norton and Sarah Gourlie had a wonderful reunion in Gainesville, Florida, recently—the occasion being Hannah’s wedding.



4/8/17 Hannah Norton and her husband Thor Blevins at the their wedding reception at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, FL

On April 8th, she married Thor Blevins at the United Church of Gainesville. Their reception was held at the Florida Museum of Natural History, featuring a large mammoth skeleton over the bride and groom's table and a fun exhibit on frogs. Family and friends from around the country (and world) joined them, including Sarah (Gourlie) Gale and her husband Michael and son Calvin. They had an absolutely wonderful time, and will be honeymooning in August in Bermuda!



4/8/17 Sarah Gourlie Gale (right) with her husband Michale and son Calvin at her long-time friend Hannah’s wedding

Congratulations to Nettie Reynolds who graduated from the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on May 21st. The graduation was held at Uni-

versity Presbyterian Church. Nettie, who joined the church recently, earned a Master’s of Divinity and is going to continue to work toward becoming a full-time hospital chaplain.



5/21/17 Whit Bodman with Nettie Reynolds at her graduation from the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Allison Carruthers, granddaughter of Marilyn Gaddis and George Carruthers, graduated "summa com laude" from Baylor University on May 13th. She majored in International Studies and spent a semester in Seville, Spain. She will begin her Master’s Degree Program at Baylor in higher education administration in August after vacationing in Europe.



5/13/17 Jonathan Carruthers, Rob Carruthers, Allison Carruthers, Sandra Carruthers, Marilyn Gaddis, and George Carruthers

Former church pianist and longtime member of the church, Florence Castle, celebrated her 101st birthday at home with several friends and her son Paul. Her favorite chocolate cake was served after everyone sang a rousing round of “Happy Birthday.” See this month’s History Corner for a Florence Castle expo!

July/August Visitor Deadline—Aug. 1, 2017

History Corner by Pat and Mel Oakes

Florence Castle, our church pianist for about 40 years, just turned 101 in May. It seems like a good time to celebrate her long and musical life!



5/13/17 Pat and Mel Oakes with Florence Castle on her 101st birthday



5/13/19 Florence Caskey, 3 years old in LaSalle, Illinois

1939 Florence Castle in front of the the trailer she and Joe lived in—1939-40. The trailer was 13 feet long, with a gas stove and no heat. Florence and Joe lived in the trailer in San Antonio and Austin, too. When they came to Austin, she was accompanying at the UT Littlefield Building in the music school and they both taught music in homes in Pemberton Heights. They also used the church as a studio--Joe taught upstairs and she taught in the basement. The Carlyle family at 25th and Nueces rented out their yard to 2 trailers--they used the house bathroom. Joe got daily \$.70 credit in the cafeteria for teaching at the university. A Mrs Jansen had some pull there--she loved string music--so set up 3 violins, a sax, and a trumpet in the courtyard near the cafeteria--that made Joe's food budget. Florence said the food was good and reasonable.



September, 1946 Joe and Florence Castle with newly-christened Rita Regina Castle and pastor Fred Cole (the 6th pastor of the church) Note the old parsonage in the background--where the Towery wing is now--the sanctuary would be to the right of the photo.

1940 Florence Castle with her trumpet in front of the church. Florence and Joe were our church musicians on piano and violin. Lucile Mick played the cello to complete the trio.

