

THE VISITOR

July/August 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

So it suddenly dawned on me that with Tom still being on Sabbatical, there would be no article from him to occupy the first page!!, and as I was panicking slightly, Travis walked by outside the office window, and I said to myself, “Wait a moment: ¿how about we publicize a little the excellent work done by two of the most amiable, easy-going guys you could ever hope to meet who are integral to the maintenance of the church, but who are rarely, if ever, encountered by the vast majority of the church membership?”

Who is Victor?



When it comes to the daily operation of our church, many in our congregation do know that custodian **Victor Cardenas** wears several hats. He performs janitorial services and various types of repair work: mechanical, electrical, painting, light gardening, plumbing. Over the approximate 15 years he has worked here, he has hurried to the church numerous times off-hours on an emergency basis to literally bail us out from the effects of flooding. He treasures the building and points out areas of concern and impending disaster. (His favorite stained-glass window is that middle one on the courtyard side of the Sanctuary where Jesus, arms spread wide, looks down lovingly over the legend “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” Victor told me he feels Jesus’ gaze on him every time and everywhere he goes in the Sanctuary.) To me, one of the important and less well-known roles played by Victor has been that of informal yet critical liaison with the

crowds of homeless who have flocked to our church over many years. The compassion and respect he regularly demonstrates toward those folks have helped to foster an attitude of reciprocal respect for our church; he’s a great emissary/employee for our church as we seek to carry out that part of our mission of service.

Probably fewer of us are aware that **Travis Morgan** has been replacing and repairing sections of the stonework and brick in our church building since at least 2010. He has replaced several arches around the building, for example, the one over the porch outside the entrance to the Sanctuary, one over the mailboxes, one over the Fellowship porch closest to our 3-story Towery Wing. He’s responsible for the construction of that whole brick wall & stone top outside the Sanctuary garden area bordering the 23rd St. sidewalk, and he did all the courtyard concrete work. He replaced all the stone lintels outside the Sanctuary over the courtyard grate, and all the stone window-sills there. His work helped waterproof our basement, cutting down considerably on those aforementioned middle-of-the-night-emergency-rescue missions that Victor used to have to make. He’s currently working on replacing window sashes so our stained-glass windows stay put right where they ought to be!

Who is Travis?



Heart of Texas Association News

July

by Liz Nash

Next year, it is our Association's turn to host the South Central Conference Annual Meeting. Linda Coats, our current vice-moderator, will be leading our planning committee. Since Linda did such outstanding work chairing the committee the last time we hosted, it's a real gift to have her doing this work again. After she and others checked venues, Linda has been able to secure Camp Allen to be our meeting site again on May 31-June 1 (or 2nd, date pending a vote of the Conference Board of Directors on the length of meetings going forward). Right now, Linda is working with Camp Allen near Navasota on what lodging and rooms to reserve. We want to have a planning committee that includes representation from all of our churches, so we can join together to provide Heart of Texas hospitality to all who come. Last time, we gathered a group that had fun and enjoyed our work together. I hope all of the Association churches will join in the planning, work, and joy of being the hosts.

At our Association Meeting this past April, we decided to have three clusters of churches to work together to host Association meetings, decide on a location when it is their cluster's turn, and do other things together as each cluster chooses. Since we are so spread out, we had a couple of churches decide which cluster to be in after the meeting. Now, that process is finalized, and the clusters are as follows:

South Texas -- Redeemer, Zuehl; Friedens, Geronimo; Bethany Congregational, San Antonio; Faith, New Braunfels; and Faith United, Woodsboro

Austin Area -- Church of the Savior, Cedar Park; Hope United, Georgetown; Open Cathedral (new church start), Leander; Rolling Hills, Lago Vista; United Christian, Austin; Trinity Church of Austin; Congregational, Austin

Brazos Valley -- Faith, Bryan; Friends Congregational, College Station; Friedens, Washington; Evangelical Lyons; Friedens, Gay Hill; St. John's, Burton, Weimar UCC; St. Peter's, Coupland.

We will be rotating our Association meetings among clusters, with the rotation going through the Austin group every other time due to its more central location. The Austin area churches will be letting us know about our fall meeting after they have decided where and when it will be.

At our South Central Conference Annual Meeting, we elected a number of people to represent and serve us at the Conference level in addition to those already serving. Those elected include 2019 and 2021 General Synod delegates Peter Bauer, Andrew Robler, Jerry Carpenter, Joshua Mata (alternate), and Phillip Guillen II (alternate); Nominating Committee member Liz Nash; Vice President of the Conference Board, Nikki Stahl; and Conference Board member Trent Williams. Our profound thanks go to Dan DeLeon who has just finished his term as the Conference Board President, and to all who have and continue to serve. And our prayers go with our General Synod delegates who are representing us this summer at Synod.

Finally, registration is open for the UCC Southern Region Women's Retreat, hosted this year by our Conference at Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas. The theme is "Joyful Expectation, Peaceful Inspiration." It's a wonderful chance to share the gospel and be together in this beautiful Hill Country setting. Registration is open for 100 women. For more information and to register, go to <https://sccucc.org/southern-region-womens-retreat-highlights/>

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Personals

by Pat Oakes

On Sunday, July 23, the congregation bade a fond farewell to **Greg Futch** during coffee hour. Greg and his wife Margaret are moving to the Denver, CO, area to be near their son Matt, his wife Cyndi, and the little ones—Alex, 6 in November, Riley, 3 and a half—who will be in Golden, CO, until they find permanent housing.



7/23/16 Greg talking about his experiences in our church, at coffee hour. Folks in the background: Bryan Sutherland, Debby Kohrt, Pam Tucker, Emmett Donnelly, Barbara Burnham, Cathy Hubbs, Dave Ross, Joe Baker and Jaime Hadley.

Matt is employed at the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden. Greg (who had been at Trinity UMC for about 10 years) came to our church about 2006—Greg and Jaime Hadley joined at the same time. Greg knew the liberal Protestant reputation of this church, and some of its history. Because he held an M.Div. from Emory in Atlanta, and he always looked for social justice congregations, our church was a good fit. After he joined the church, Mathis Blackstock visited with Greg several times, and persuaded him (in his imitable fashion) to become a deacon. One of the major tasks he took on as a deacon was to lead the sabbatical committee which picked Rev. Frank Dietz the previous time Tom took went on sabbatical. Greg participated in or led a number of small groups, wrangled the ushers, and led a few adult classes (the Historical Jesus, another on the parables, and another with Cecile Adam and Tom). He has also led the

service a few times, when Tom was gone, or while Amelia or another guest came to fill in for the sermon. He was honored when Matt Blackstock asked him to deliver one of the eulogies at his memorial service, and that that text is on the Men's Book club site. He cherishes the many friendships he has formed with other members of the church. One of the events he is most grateful for being able to lead was his mother's memorial service, in which music was a major element. He has wound up his run here by singing in the choir. Music has been a staple of his faith journey since childhood! He is looking forward to finding a new church community in Denver and looks at this next chapter as a continuing adventure. He will always be most grateful for the Congregational Church of Austin. The farewell was made even more poignant when, as the closing hymn, the congregation sang Greg's favorite—"This Is My Father's World" with two wonderful verses added by the amazing Nodie Murphy. We will miss you, Greg!

We will also be missing **Hyun Ha**, a graduate student at UT from Seoul, South Korea, who has been worshipping with us for the past two years.



6/25/17 Choir members with departing Hyun Ha: Dennis Murphy, Barbara Burnham, Nodie Murphy, Cathy Hubbs, Hyun Ha, Greg Futch, and Chester Rosson at coffee hour farewell.

She was a wonderful addition to our choir. She finished her Ph.D. in May and will be working on her post-doc at Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. She had been worried about making the 20 hour drive, was glad to have a friend who made the drive with her, and was delighted to arrive safely and somewhat

(continued on p. 5.)

Heart of Texas Association News

August

by Liz Nash

The churches of the Heart of Texas Association follow God's call to ministry in ways we are often unaware of outside our immediate communities. Of course, many of our churches have magnificent ongoing ministries to those around them. I want to share here a few unique and joyous things our churches are doing.

The members of St. Peter's Church of Coupland sponsor several children and raise additional money to support Family Village Farm, an orphanage and school in South India through our UCC/Disciples of Christ Global Ministries partnership. The church has been offering this support for several years. Recently, a retired Methodist minister who travels to the mission frequently as a volunteer teacher visited St. Peter's and shared a video of the kids they sponsor, told them more about the orphanage, and told them of how the place also gives a home to elderly widow women who do not have families for support and who are "grannies" there, helping to care for the children. The poverty these children and widows face otherwise is extreme. This visitor came while on a trip to Texas because a staff member at Family Village Farm told him St. Peter's sponsors more children there than any other church.

Faith UCC New Braunfels is hosting the first stop on a display of the art reflections of women and children refugees claiming asylum in a south Texas detention center. Those whose art is on display are people who have come to this country to escape threats and violence they have witnessed and suffered from gangs, the drug trade, and other terrible situations. Rev. Dr. Helen Boursier, a Presbyterian minister who is close to the Faith UCC community, and Rev. Sabrina Jennings of our Association worked in this ministry as volunteers in 2015 and 2016. Since very few people are allowed access to these facilities, Faith is giving a unique space for expression and voice through art to many of these people. For those unable to go to the exhibit, you can view the artworks and read the testimonies at www.RefugeeArtBlog.com.

Over 60 youth and adult chaperones from United

Christian Austin, Friends Congregational College Station, Congregational Church of Austin, and Church of the Savior Cedar Park (joined by the youth from University Christian Austin to make the group even larger) went on a mission trip run by Reach Beyond Mission to Washington, DC at the beginning of July. Small groups of youth and adults traveled all over DC by subway and bus each day working at food banks, breakfast programs, homeless shelters, and other ministries to the enormous poor population amid the wealth of our nation's capital. The group also toured the Capitol, attended a presentation at the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, had a speaker come from the Baptist Joint Committee on the Separation of Church and State, and had a presentation from Tim Tutt, former Senior Minister of United Christian and current Senior Minister of Westmoreland Congregational in Bethesda, MD -- all to educate about and encourage the group to participate in justice advocacy.

Let's rejoice in the living of the gospel by these churches and by the many ways all of our churches are seeking to bring God's joy, justice, love, and hope to those around them.

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

earlier than she had expected. She thanks the warmth of the church members and will be thinking of us. If you would like to stay in touch, here is Hyun's new info--Phone number: 737-703-9672, Address: 146 E North Shore Dr., South Bend, Indiana 46617.

The church welcomed a new member on Sunday, July 23rd. **Emmett Donnelly** is a 3rd year UT student in the 5-year aerospace engineering program. Emmett was born in New York State where he attended a UCC church. His family moved to San Antonio when he was 10. His parents and sister still live there. Emmett likes to hike/backpack and is a good cook. Welcome, Emmett!!



7/23/17 Betty Bodman introduced new member Emmett Donnelly while Rev. Amelia Fulbright read the order of service for new members.

On July 2-7, five of our youth and one adult—**Megan Goff, Tess Howicz, Alden Harris, Savanna Tucker, Harrison Tucker, and Liz Nash**—joined with a group of over 70 youth and adults (including our joint youth group friends from University Christian Church) to fly to Washington, D.C., for this year's mission trip. They worked through Reach Beyond Mission (the mission trip organization led by Mary Lu Johnston of University Christian and largely staffed by mission trip alumni) learning about justice advocacy, traveling all over D. C. to do volunteer work, and sleeping on the floor (on mattresses) at Calvary Baptist Church near the National Mall. It was quite a feat for Reach Beyond to get us all set up to work in different spots and to get us launched each-

day in the right direction, since our very large group went many different ways in smaller numbers. For a brief description of the group's activities, see the Heart of Texas Association News in this newsletter. In addition to the volunteer work and presentations, they were treated to the magnificent fireworks display on the Mall from a vantage point on the Capitol side of the Washington Monument, which meant they saw it all with the monument as the center: fabulous! And they did some neat museum hopping in groups, some to the Newseum and some to the National Galleries and the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, all in easy walking distance of our host church. A great week and then (Liz says) a welcome return to a real bed at the end!

Savanna Tucker reports on her experience on the mission trip, "The mission trip to Washington, D.C.



7/5/17 Our Austin youth while on their mission trip to D.C. Look for Liz Nash (back row, far left); Harrison Tucker, Savanna Tucker, Megan Goff and Alden Harris (back, 6th from the left), and Tess Howicz, 4th from the left, middle row.

was a completely new experience for me. While it was my third mission trip, it was the first time that we worked hands-on with the people we were helping. We volunteered at many organizations including Bread for the City, Capitol Area Food Bank, Charlie's Place, Food and Friends, Central Union Mission, and many others. Some of these nonprofits are food service, some are for shelter, and some are clothes pantries. It was rewarding to help people who are less

fortunate, and I worked on overcoming my fear of talking to these people. The food we ate was not that great except for one night when I had jambalaya and that was really good. I got to know other mission trippers who have been on prior trips much better this year. Overall, I really enjoyed going to Washington D.C.”

Megan Goff, another youth participant says, "The youth had presentations from several speakers who work with activist groups. I really enjoyed learning how to combat homelessness and poverty through political means."

Alden Harris reports, "Before this mission trip, I don't think I realized how hard it really is to be homeless, or maybe I should say that it didn't really register before. Now I have a better understanding of how other people live, people whose lives are different from mine, at least on the surface. I worked closely with people who don't sleep in the same place every night or have easy access to food. When you don't know where your next meal is going to come from or when it's going to be, your priorities are different. Your reality is different.”

"I loved that I got to work at many different places that helped the needy people of D.C. A few of the things I did was sorting out clothes donations, feeding the homeless, and sorting through furniture for people who can't afford furniture. It was great knowing that what I was doing would make a difference,” were the highlights that **Harrison Tucker** will remember.

Tess Howicz says, "My favorite experience about the mission trip this year was being able to help all the houseless people in Washington. I was able to talk with people less fortunate than me, and learn about their experiences. This made me want to help people even more!" Tess told her parents that the organizers used the word "houseless" instead of "homeless.”

Don Miles reports that he has a second great-grandchild on the way. The fathers are both sons of his daughter, Juliette. The first one that he learned about in May is a boy due in November. The newest one is due in February (gender not yet known.). Another piece of good news is that his son Richard is joining the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS,) a Washington think-tank. He started in early July as their "Director of U.S.-Mexico Futures Initiative.”

Jaime Hadley and former CCA member, **Rev. Beth Gleason**, (now a UCC pastor at Christ Congregational in Ft. Morgan, CO) were both in San Francisco the weekend of July 7-9. Beth par-

ticipated in the Avon Breast Cancer walk there. Jaime walked with her across the Golden Gate bridge as part of the Avon Walk. Walking across this iconic bridge was on the bucket list for both of them! Beth looks forward to her visit to CCA in late September when she will be in SA for her nephew's wedding.

The Bodmans have had a peripatetic summer—filled with weddings and grandchildren. Whit reports that in June they took a brief trip to New York where he met



7/7-9/17 Jaime Hadley and Beth Gleason walk the Golden Gate Bridge to some pretty stiff wind.

his new granddaughter, Elsie, born April 3, for the first time (Betty was already there.) Then, in July, they drove to Colorado Springs where Whit officiated at the wedding of a niece, Sarah. They had a great time with both kids there, and grandchildren of course. Clara, the three-year-old, was still dancing when her grandparents were ready to go home. Then they drove to Pennsylvania for another wedding (another niece) the following weekend. They visited Janet Parsons in Topeka on the way. That wedding also went smoothly. Both kids were there, and grandchildren, and Clara once again tore up the dance floor. Driving on the way home they took in the grand old Opry and made it to 13 states and 4000 miles. Most recently they headed up to Maine for the third wedding, a cousin. They will spend some time taking care of grandchildren in New Jersey while their daughter grades papers. Then on to Massachusetts to sail in a regatta and visit Whit's old church. Then home. Whit hopes next summer they do not spend so much time away from home. Whit says, "Miss the 100 degree weather. Not. But nice to be able to officiate at family weddings—a treat, really.” Sadly for us, Whit also says, "I have negotiated a retirement date: December 2018. We will move to Jersey City perhaps a couple years after—not on

my top 100 places to retire to, but that's where the grandchildren are—no debate. We are not rushing to get up there but it is on our minds.”



7/17 Whit and Betty Bodman's youngest granddaughter Elsie Matthews

On July 7th, **Marilyn Gaddis** and **George Caruthers** flew to Portland OR and “shuttled” to Eugene to honor Marilyn’s cousin, Iva Hoffman, on her 100th birthday! Iva had lived with Marilyn’s family in Sacramento, CA when Marilyn was in elementary school. She still lives by herself in her own home. While driving to Eugene, a Missouri cousin fell and cracked her hip bone requiring three large screws and an overnight in the hospital. Events were postponed awaiting the six from the Midwest. A celebration after the church service brought forth some interesting memories from attendees. On July 10th, the actual birthday, a barbecue was hosted by Iva's remaining son for the more than thirty relatives that had gathered. (Marilyn had sent some Texas salsas for the meal!) More memories were shared and Iva, quite a poet, read some of her poems to close the celebration. Marilyn notes, “Twas so special to connect with relatives on my mom’s side that I’d not seen for many years!”

The church hosted a **Waterloo Trio** concert at 7:00 p.m. on Friday evening, June 30. It was preceded by a light potluck supper which started at 6 p.m. The Waterloo Trio is composed of our adored and accom-

plished church musicians **Jonathan Geer** (pianist) and **Tony Rogers** (cello), rounded out by the excellent violinist **James Anderson** (who was back in Austin for a visit from where he now lives in North Carolina), who has also played at church a number of times. As they describe themselves on Facebook, “Waterloo Trio is all about bringing chamber music out of the concert hall and into more casual venues. We play everything from Björk to Beethoven.” There was a good crowd of about 50 enthusiastic music lovers.



6/30/17 A fabulous evening concert at church with the Waterloo Trio with James Anderson, Tony Rogers and Jonathan Geer

It was a real treat to see and visit with Bethany Russell Briggs Baker and her husband Joe Baker at church on Sunday, July 23rd. Beth and Joe were in town to visit her brother Stephen. Stephen and Beth and Amy are the grown children of Rollin and Betsy Russell. The “kids” grew up in the church while Rollin worked in several capacities with the South Central Conference of the UCC—now the Heart of Texas Conference. Rollin and Betsy retired in North Carolina several years ago and Beth and Amy and their families also live in NC.

(See photo p. 10.)

September Visitor Deadline—Aug. 31, 2017

History Corner

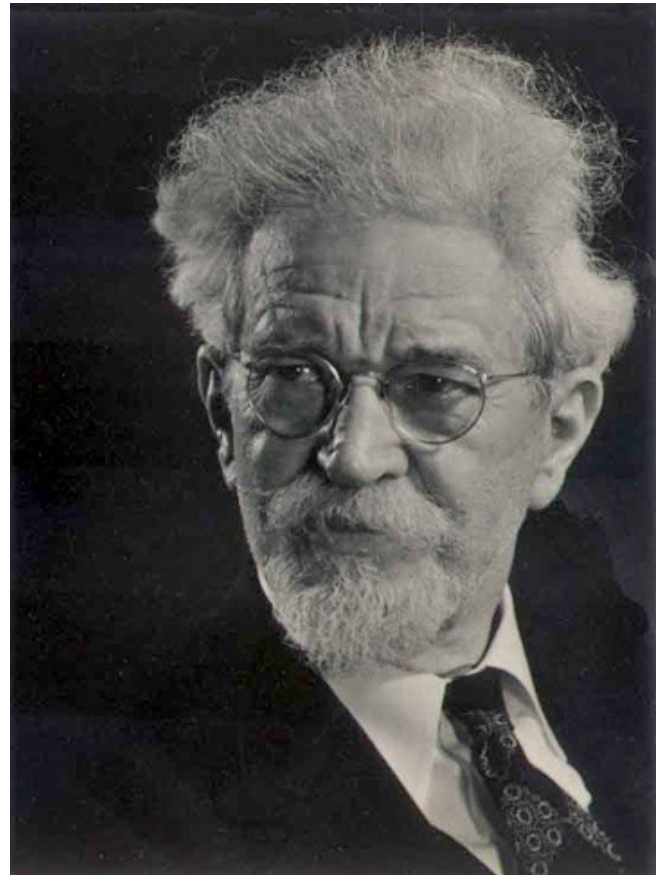
by Pat and Mel Oakes

Church Outreach to UT Students during the 1930s

Mel Oakes found this interesting article (*See p. 9*) in the Austin Statesman about our church. It is amazing how many students attended various church events including dances held in the church basement. At the time, UT forbade dancing on campus, so the church was a handy place to come to dance. Hildegard K. Everett told us students used to peek in the alley windows to see what was going on in the church basement.



1930s Sevier Eratus "Jack" Frost, pastor of the church from 9/1/29 - 6/1935



About 1935 John Matthias Kuehne, a UT physics professor, the father of the late Hildegard Kuehne Everett, and one of the early members of this church

FRANK ATTITUDE OF YOUTH GETS APPROVAL

A modern attitude of right thinking toward truth and reality was advanced as the logical way of confronting church problems and as an appeal to the young people of the community, when Dr. J. M. Kuehne, professor of physics in the University of Texas, addressed the annual Texas conference of Congregational church in session this morning.

"So far as I know this is the only church which is meeting modern problems freely and frankly, without any hedging. We discuss issues some of the more wide-awake students find themselves up against and when such students discover we are attacking those problems in this way, they are always willing to come to us again," the speaker declared, and cited instances from his own class in the church to illustrate his point.


"We believe in young people today, and like their own attitude of frankness. So we try to be just as frank as they are. Too many people want absolute certainty when it comes to a conception of God or personal immortality. But since absolute certainty is an abstraction in this case, the best thing is to teach right thinking," Dr. Kuehne asserted.

The address caused considerable comment and discussion within the conference.

The Rev. S. E. Frost, pastor of the First Congregational church of Austin, announced there are only 19 Congregational students registered in the university, but more than 1000 individual students have regularly attended the church's activities, including both classes and social affairs.

Dances and social meetings in the church were advocated as attractions for students, and a report on the regular Friday evening dances for students at the First Congregational church was made.

The Rev. L. J. Marsh was elected registrar of Congregational churches at the meeting this morning. Other elections were:

The Rev. W. A. Humphries of Dallas, auditor; the Rev. Marsh,  Continued on Page 14, Col. 8.



7/12/17 Wonderful visiting with Bethany Russell Briggs, Baker when she and her husband Joe Baker were in Austin visiting her brother Stephen Russell, with longtime friends Pat and Mel Oakes

It is with sadness that we report the passing on June 22 of Rev. Anthony Bertram Miller (Bert), age 90, the minister of this church from July 1, 1950, until the fall of 1956 when he left to become pastor of the South Congregational Church in St. Johnsbury, VT, from 1956-63. Bert died as a result of a bad fall with resulting head injuries while visiting his late wife's cousins in NC on his way north to see his many friends in Vermont where he and Mary Margaret summered for many years. Bert was the minister of this church when Clark and Cathy Hubbs became part of the congregation. Pat Oakes' cousin Phil Brown from the St Johnsbury church knew Bert and Mary Margaret (she died in 2014) for many years as they came back from Florida each summer after Bert's retirement. Phil, a fine musician, with his group, the Maple Leaf Seven, led a Dixieland jazz memorial service at United Community Church in St. Johnsbury on Sunday, July 30. For more about Rev. Miller's life as written up by Mel Oakes, co-historian of the Congregational Church of Austin, see: <https://congregationalchurchofaustin.org/about-us/history/anthony-bertram-miller/>