

# THE VISITOR

May 2018

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

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**Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt**



**I**n her book, *Coming Back to Life, Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*, Joanna Macy, a long-time environmental activist and spiritual leader, identifies three broad responses to environmental harm, though they also apply to injustice committed against people. She calls them holding actions, structural change, and transformation of consciousness.

Holding actions include such things as reaching out to those who're suffering injustice, exposing injustice, protesting injustice, committing acts of civil disobedience to disrupt the machinery of injustice, supporting legislation or taking those committing injustice to court in an effort to curtail their activities.

Structural change includes efforts to transform the current unjust systems, structures, and institutions into systems, structures, and institutions that produce just outcomes. But it also includes efforts to create alternative systems, structures, and institutions that produce more just outcomes, alternatives that enable people to opt out of the dominant unjust order now rather than wait for it to change.

Transformation of consciousness seeks to transform people's hearts and minds by transforming how people experience and understand their relationships with other people, the earth, and God or the sacred. What are the mindsets, the habitual ways of thinking, the underlying feelings, prejudices, and attitudes that produce and perpetuate personal acts of injustice and systems of injustice? How can these habitual, largely unconscious thoughts and feelings be transformed to bring about greater justice and well-being?

Holding actions and structural change are the outer work, the work out there in the world. Transformation of consciousness is the inner work, the work within hearts and minds. The inner work and the outer work are intimately related. They inform one another. A transformation of consciousness can lead one to engage more actively in holding actions and to work more strenuously for structural change. Engaging in holding actions and working for structural change can transform one's consciousness. As Richard Rohr puts it, "we think our way into a new way of living, and we live our way into a new way of thinking."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, had a deep appreciation for the necessity of all three responses. At a speech he gave at Riverside Church in New York City, Dr. King said, "On the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside; but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produced beggars needs restructuring. true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth...and say,

(cont. on p. 2)

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth...and say, 'This is not just.'"

Holding action: be the Good Samaritan by ministering to the victim's wounds. Structural change: transform the whole Jericho Road, restructure the edifice that produces beggars. Transformation of consciousness: a true revolution of values.

Holding actions, structural change, transformation of consciousness—all three, when deeply integrated and working in tandem, are a strong force for change. As we continue to reflect on and explore our own common vision together as a church, including our outreach, justice and spiritual ministry, I think it would be helpful if we reviewed our ministry in light of Joanna Macy's typology. Some of you have already said you'd like to participate. So please, keep your eyes and ears open for announcements regarding when we'll meet sometime in the near future to reflect on and review our ministry.

Tom

## June Visitor Deadline—May 25, 2018

### Church Leadership

Trustee Chair	Keith Beresheim
Deacons Chair	Betty Bodman
Outreach Team	Whit Bodman
Moderator	John Goff
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Bryan Rutherford
Christian Education	Lynne Lemley
	Darcy Beresheim
Youth Sunday School	
Coordinator	
Clerk	Jaime Hadley
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmaster	Mel Oakes
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

## Heart of Texas Association News

### March

by Liz Nash

Our Heart of Texas Association gathering on April 22nd at Friends Congregational UCC in College Station was an outpouring of generosity. The “potluck” project of bringing supplies for hygiene kits and assembling them for Back Bay Mission resulted in 77 kits, enthusiastically assembled at the end of the meeting. We voted to pay up to \$300 to buy supplies to complete the kits that didn’t have the full list of supplies, but our expenditure from Association funds will be much less because of another generous gift -- **Linda Oberhoff** presented the payments in the lunch basket, meant to reimburse Friedens Washington for the delicious lunch they provided, as a gift toward completing the hygiene kits. A member of Friends Congregational obtained a donation of nice cloth bags for the kits, bags that can be reused by the homeless folks who receive these kits from Back Bay Mission. We also had a group who drove four hours each way from St. Paul Corpus Christi, a generous gift of time to be with us, much appreciated by everyone there. Of course, we also deeply appreciate the gift Friends gave by hosting us when Weimar’s building was not ready, and **Dan DeLeon’s** gift of an inspiring opening worship.

We also appreciate the generosity of those who have committed to serve in new ways in the Association. We have three new members on our Committee on Ministry. These include **Rev. Cecile Adam**, retired Seton Medical Center chaplain (but still very active) and member of Congregational Church of Austin; **Rev. Darrin Holub**, pastor of Evangelical UCC, Lyons, and Friedens UCC, **Gay Hill**; and **Michelle Dupy**, member of St. Peter’s Church of Coupland. **Rev. John Gage**, senior pastor of United Christian Church in Austin, is the new Committee on Ministry chair, and **Pastor Cindy Miller** of St. John’s UCC, Burton, continues as the registrar. **Pastor Charlotte Albert** of St. Peter’s Church of Coupland, came on

board as our Association secretary. She joins continuing officers **Pastor Janet Sherman** of Faith UCC, New Braunfels, as moderator; **Linda Coats**, member of Friends Congregational UCC, College Station, as vice-moderator; and **Joe Ward**, member of Faith UCC, New Braunfels, as treasurer. All of our new Committee on Ministry members and our secretary were voted in at our spring meeting.

At our recent Committee on Ministry meeting, we had an ordination interview with Will Nelson and have recommended him for ordination, with his Ecclesiastical Council to be held at our fall association meeting. **Will** is a member of Church of the Savior in Cedar Park, and earned his Master of Divinity from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. We will send out his ordination paper in the weeks before the meeting for all to read in preparation. We also welcomed **René Slataper**, member of Congregational Church of Austin, as a Member in Discernment. **René** is about to start seminary at Lexington Theological Seminary in their mainly online program. He is the third of our current Members in Discernment to be part of the Lexington program, a historic seminary of the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ that is very welcoming to UCC students, and the fourth to be part of an online program. We congratulate **Will** and **René**, and look forward to learning how they will be called to serve in Christ’s ministry.

I look forward to taking our gift of hygiene kits out to Biloxi, Mississippi to the Back Bay Mission May Board of Directors meeting. I know these gifts will be deeply appreciated.

Blessings in Christ,  
**Liz Nash**, Association Minister

## Personals

by Pat Oakes

**R**ev. **Amelia Fulbright**, Labyrinth Campus Minister at UT and our summer interim pastor while Tom was on sabbatical last summer shared the following. "Over the week of April 3rd-6th, I traveled to Washington, D.C., for a series of events focused on the intersections of race, theology, and government. This trip was one piece of an educational fellowship for Pastoral Leaders in Public Life through Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; I am in the 2018-2020 cohort of this fellowship program. Our itinerary was built around the 50th Anniversary of the assassination of **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** and included a series of lectures with public theologians from Wesley Theological Seminary, a chapel service at Howard University Divinity School, a visit to the MLK Memorial, and a guided tour of the Museum of African-American History and Culture. We also spent time at the ACT to End Racism Rally, sponsored by the National Council of Churches, and enjoyed an intimate conversation with the pastor of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, one of the oldest independent black churches in the nation. It is difficult to sum up the week in a few sentences, and I imagine I will be reflecting on it for years to come. But to be sure, touring the African-American History Museum on April 4th, the anniversary of King's martyrdom, was one of the most poignant portions of the trip. Admission to the museum was open that day, and so it was filled with visitors, including many African-American families guiding their children through century after century of our painful national past--slavery, segregation, and the ongoing struggle for freedom. On the floor of the museum devoted to the Atlantic slave-trade, I overheard a small girl ask her mother, "Momma, were they trying to kill the people in those ships?" "No, baby." her mother replied, "They needed to keep them alive so they could work." I know that several of my white colleagues and I were taken aback by conversations like these that we overheard between parents and children at the museum—conversations that we, in our privilege as white people, have never had to have in quite the same way. On the other hand, you could see pride on the faces of both parents and children at finally having an entire structure devoted to telling the story of their ancestors, as it really

happened--the unvarnished truth in all its ugliness, yet punctuated by the irrepressible beauty, creativity, brilliance, and resilience of the African-American spirit. Mostly it was a gift to witness this scene unfolding and to carry home with me an awareness of how much I still have to learn about the complicated history of race in America."



4/18 Amelia Fulbright visited the MLK monument during cherry blossom season in D.C. while she was there for part of an educational fellowship

**Sara (née Schumacher) Ross** kind of sneaked her 80th birthday past the congregation in mid-December, but the **Ross** family celebrated **Sara's** December birthday in April in grand style. She has not a gray hair at 80! Her sister **Susie** inherited those same genes. **Sara** rented a short term rental in the neighborhood (a bit less than one mile away) for April 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>. Seven family members from around the country came for a week and saw the sights, from Fredericksburg to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to San Antonio. Visitors were brother **Dan Schumacher** and his wife **Cindy** and sister **Deborah Schumacher** from Ann Arbor, Michigan, sister **Susan S. Heath** and her husband **Fred** from Orono, Maine, sister **Carolyn S. Speer** from Pasadena, Texas, and **Dave** and **Sara's** son **Michael Ross** from Palm Bay Florida (who came early and joined the choir for Easter services).

## Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

In town attendees were son **Andy Ross** (also in church on Easter Sunday) and his wife **Leslie Poer**. Visiting Saturday only were niece **Jennifer Ammonette** (daughter of **Carolyn**) and **Jennifer's** daughter **Nancy Grace**. This very musical extended family enjoyed a number of music playing sessions. Musicians were **Andy Ross**, oboe, **Dan Schumacher**, flute, **Susan Heath**, flute, oboe and violin, **Sara Ross**, violin and viola, and **Carolyn Speer** piano. **Andy** also spent time teaching reed making to **Susan** and sent her home with a cache of reeds. A final big dinner at Fonda San Miguel closed out the week.

Because of what the doctors had seen in early tests, there had been some concern that there might be cancer which they learned right away there was not. **Chester** did not get the news until the 24th that the problem had been caused by the burst appendix. **Chester** stayed 4 nights in the hospital and was most grateful when **Barbara Burnham** and their son **Robin Rosson** came to Tyler to take him from the hospital back home to Crockett. They were able to stay a few days while they made sure that **Chester** was OK. “The best nurses ever,” says **Chester**. He is most grateful for all the prayers and hopes to be back to church at some point soon.



4/4/18 Clockwise from bottom left – Sara (whose back is to the cameras—note no gray hair), Susan Heath, Dan Schumacher, Andy Ross, Caroline Speer enjoying music together at the Rosses home

Keep **Chester Rosson** in your prayers as he continues to recuperate from an unexpectedly difficult surgery. Tragically, his good friend **Ray Charo** from Austin who was driving to Crockett the Monday before **Chester's** April 11<sup>th</sup> surgery was killed in a head-on crash by a woman who was passing two cars in a no-passing zone—she was treated and released. **Ray** had been planning to drive **Chester** to the hospital in Tyler (80 miles away from Crockett) on Tuesday and stay a day or two. Instead, **Chester's** niece drove him to the hospital the next day—expecting a laparoscopic procedure, but instead the doctors found that somehow **Chester** had had a burst appendix at some point with no pain, so he had not been treated for the infection. At that point they had to do major surgery which took a good while as they cleaned everything

**Chencho Flores** and **Beth Placek** celebrated their second anniversary a few weeks early with a second honeymoon trip to Fredericksburg and environs (their anniversary was on May 1). Beth reports that the hill country was absolutely gorgeous—more beautiful wildflowers than she's ever seen, especially on side trips on back roads. They stayed at the Sunday House Inn in Fredericksburg which was as great as before—she can't say enough good things about that place. **Chencho** played his accordion at Altos de Jalisco—a restaurant where they ate last year on their first honeymoon. He was recognized and was asked to “come back and bring your accordion.” He did and was a big hit! The old courthouse is now the library in Fredericksburg. It is a stunning building built from an unusual type of native stone and surrounded by lovely grounds, including a Romanesque fountain with benches all around it—and a man/eagle totem. The interior is just as beautiful. Upstairs there is the Texana room and a large reading room with sparkling windows on 3 sides with views. **Beth** and **Chencho** sat reading at a round antique table with a direct view of the pioneer museum, another classic Fredericksburg building. They also enjoyed a fun coffee shop/ice cream shop deli right on the main street—and of course, Dooley's Five and Dime. On their way home, **Chencho** played in the pickin' circle in Luckenbach.

**Greg Futch** reports from the Colorado component of the Congregational Church of Austin—CCOA North. He drove from Denver where he lives to attend a special concert of the Austin Piazzolla Quintet

## Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

at **Beth Gleason's** church in Ft. Morgan. Jonathan and the APQ came to **Beth's** Christ Congregational on Tuesday, April 17. The proceeds from the concert went to a family center there in Ft. Morgan which gives all kinds of support (financial, job and housing search, and so on) to families in need. It was a very fine concert, and **Beth** and **Greg** were so happy to see the group (especially **James Anderson**, **Jonathan Geer**, and **Tony Rogers**), and they have added a new guy, **Ben Thomas**, who plays an accordion-like instrument called the "bandoneon." **Phil Spencer** plays bass. They played pieces by **Astor Piazzolla**, and by **Jonathan**, and by **James**. It was thrilling and inspiring. The church gave them a standing ovation at the close. The next day, they played a concert at Ft. Morgan High School, and held a master class. And from there, they went on to concerts in Boulder and Denver.



4/17/18 Greg Futch, Jonathan Geer, and Pastor Beth Gleason before the APQ concert at Beth's church--Christ Congregational UCC in Ft. Morgan, CO

On Sunday, May 12th, Tapestry Singers will hold their annual spring concert. Our own choir member **Lucy Erda** will be performing with the main choir and with the auditioned choir, Loose Threads. She would love to see some of you there. The "Bright Star" Concert will be at St. John's United Methodist Church, 2140 Allandale Road. Advance tickets are 20% off! Student/Senior (60+): \$8.00 USD Adults: \$12:00 USD.

It has been quite a while since we had heard from **Heather** and **Zac Lytle** who spent the last several years in Africa with their daughter **Abi**. Heather was working in obstetrics at a hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi. After her contract ran out, the 3 spent some time trying to find a good place for the family back here in the States. They are now living in Yakima, Washington, where Heather has taken a job at the Yakima Valley Farm Worker's Clinic. Heather has been pretty busy and tired with her new job and being pregnant. **Zac** writes that things are going well there. They are enjoying the weather and the new surroundings. **Zac** is trying to fix up their house while sneaking in some bike rides. They went to a local church for an Easter service, but they still miss our church in Austin. **Heather's** mother, brother and dad were all able to join them! Their daughter **Abigail** turned three at the end of April and they are expecting a baby boy towards the end of May! Hopefully, they will be able to come for a visit to Austin sometime this summer. **Zac** and **Heather** send their love and best wishes to the congregation.

Our talented **Megan Goff** (daughter of Gail Christeson and John Goff) and her artist classmates at Anderson High School had an exhibit of their art on display in mid-April at Images of Austin, 5933 Burnet Rd. The exhibit was the culmination of a 2-year class, and each student presented 8 pieces and a curation summary. Next year **Megan** will be attending the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. There are 10 students in the class – 5 presented at Images of Austin, and the other 5 at the Anderson High School library.

## Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

**Florence Castle**, our church pianist for more than 40 years, will celebrate her 102nd birthday on May 13 which is also Mother's Day. **Woodrow Wilson** was president when she was born!! Florence would love to be remembered with a birthday card. You can send a card to her home (yes, she is still living at home) at 2901 Del Curto, Austin, TX 78704. She plays the piano very rarely these days, but she still does so occasionally.

**Priscilla Perkins Grew** (her parents were early members of the church) and her husband Professor **Ed Grew** enjoyed a recent ceremony at the University of Maine. **Susan Hunter**, President of the University of Maine, and **Jeffery Mills**, President of the University of Maine Foundation, honored **Ed** on March 30 with a special private luncheon in the President's Office in Alumni Hall and presented them with a Stillwater Society plaque. Celebrating with them was **Scott Johnson**, Director of the School of Earth and Climate Sciences, who has always provided wonderful support to **Ed** in the School. **Ed** has worked at the University of Maine for 33 years. **Priscilla** and **Ed** have commuted between Nebraska and Maine for a good number of years. **Ed** isn't retiring as he wants to keep working. He was honored for his donations to Maine, he established an **Edward Grew** professorship in mineralogy and petrology, and contributes to help the School fund field trips for students. **Priscilla** retired from her geology career in 2015 and is staying on in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Zona** and **Omer Galle** report from Kansas that everything is going well for them. They will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on May 30th—congratulations to them both!! Their daughter **Kristin** is a UCC pastor who specializes in interim appointments—she and her husband **Rev. Dr. Brent Hampton** live in Brenham where he is pastor of the Brenham Presbyterian Church. Their son **Karl** lives in Cairo, Egypt, where both he and his Egyptian wife **Sylvia** work with USAID. **Karl** and **Sylvia** flew into Dallas in February for **Kaitlyn's** (**Kristin's** oldest) wedding to **Sam Kirzner**. It was a wonderful event. **Kristin** married them, assisted by a Jewish rabbi -- **Sam** is Jewish. **Karl** and **Sylvia** then drove back to Kansas with the senior **Galles** and spent about a week. **Karl** is planning to make the flight again for their anniversary celebration set for June. **Sylvia** will not make that trip because of work and she also had another trip to the U.S. for USAID last November and those long trips are incredibly long.



4/18 Ed (l) and Priscilla Perkins Grew (3rd from the left) with Susan Hunter and Jeffrey Mills at the University of Maine Stillwater Award presentation



4/1/18 Vic Appel (wearing a back brace as a result of a fall some time ago) and Debbie Appel Knowlton (sister Cheryl Appel was also at church) greeting pastor Tom VandeStadt while Bill Bear-dall, Michael Ross and Sara Ross participate in the flowering of the cross on Easter Sunday

**Personals (cont)**  
by Pat Oakes



4/1/18 Dennis Murphy visiting with Debbie Appel Knowlton on Easter Sunday



4/1/18 Zoey Parkhill with her Easter eggs during the church hunt



4/1/18 William Harris with his Easter eggs

## History Corner

Celebrating 102 years with Florence Castle!



1918 Florence Caskey (Castle) at about age 2  
LaSalle, Illinois



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



1940 Florence and Joe Castle were our church musicians on piano and violin, but also used the church during the week as a music studio. Florence posed in front of the church with her cornet



Florence and Joe Castle celebrating the choir--1986

## History Corner, (cont.)



1988 Church trio with Joe (violin) and Florence Castle (piano) and David Proctor (cello)



5/15/06 Vic Appel and Florence Castle on her 90th birthday!



12/27/1998 Farewell party for Felicia Day, as she went off to Hollywood to seek her fortune. The trio--Felicia Day, violin, with Robin Rosson, cello, and Florence Castle, piano. Find out more about Felicia by going to <http://feliciadaybook.com> Mary Sinclair is in the back left.



5/20/16 Florence Castle playing the piano for her 100th birthday celebration at her home while Sara and Dave Ross, Florence's nephew Wayne Caskey, and Nodie Murphy sing along to "The Hills Are Alive to the Sound of Music"— Florence has had the same Mason and Hamblin piano since she was 16!