

THE VISITOR

June 2018

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

408 West Twenty-third Street, Austin, Texas 78705-5214
(512) 472-2370 Fax: (512) 472-1175
E-mail: ucausti@swbell.net

Web site: congregationalchurchofaustin.org

Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

New Testament scholar, Michael Crosby, writes that in the ancient Greco-Roman world, where Christian churches first gathered, people spoke of families as households. In fact, ancient Greek, the language of the New Testament, didn't have a word equivalent to our word, family. To identify a family, Greek-speakers used the word, *oikia*, which means house or household.

Oikia signifies the people living in a household, the resources available to that household, and the relationships between those people and their resources. It's from this concept of household as people, resources,

and relationships that we get our word, economy, from the Greek, *oikia*, household, and *nomos*, order. In Greek, *oikonomia* signifies the ordering of relationships between people and resources *within* each household, as well as the ordering of relationships *between* households at the communal level of village, province, nation, and empire.

In the Greco-Roman world, the stability and well-being of society depended on every level of household, from the family household up to the empire, being managed properly and orderly. Of course, different people had different ideas regarding what properly and orderly meant. Caesar had one idea, Jesus had another idea. For Caesar, a society managed properly and orderly meant wealth flowed from the bottom to the top. It was unjust, but justice wasn't the goal. Ensuring that wealth, privilege and power were concentrated at the top was the goal. For Jesus, justice *was* the goal. Wealth had to be shared in a fair and equitable fashion, and those in need had to be prioritized. Jesus sought to rearrange the relationships within households and between households so as to reorganize the economy around justice. Caesar's model was the dominant one at that time. Jesus' model was the radical alternative. It's still that way today.

Nevertheless, the household as an ordered set of relationships between people and resources is still a helpful concept, as is the relationship between households at varying levels of economic scale, from family, to neighborhood, to city, to state, to nation, to globe. All family households are nested within larger relations of households.

Austin Interfaith makes good use of this concept of *oikonomia*—the relationships between people and resources within and between households—when it calls on its members to conduct house meetings. What are the pressures that you and your family face in your particular household, understanding that your household is nested within a larger set of relationships between people and resources, within a larger nexus of households? And what are the pressing justice issues within the larger nexus of households—your neighborhood, your city, your county, your state?

(cont. on p. 2)

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On June 10, Austin Interfaith will convene a Delegate's Assembly to ratify its justice agenda for the *oikonomia* that we call greater Austin. Compiled through hundreds of family and faith community house meetings throughout Austin, Austin Interfaith's justice agenda will focus on affordable housing, public transportation, public education, affordable health care, and criminal justice. Please make every effort to participate in the Austin Interfaith Delegates Assembly on Sunday, June 10, 3 pm, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 1206 E. 9th St.

Tom

July/August Visitor Deadline—June 22, 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
Coordinators	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

We have some excellent members and ministers from our Association churches doing dedicated work to help plan and do the last minute work to host the South Central Conference Annual Meeting on June 1st - 2nd at Camp Allen. The list is long, but at this point, I want to lift up **Linda Coates**, our vice-moderator and chair of the meeting, who is handling so many tasks -- from arranging the banquet menu to finalizing workshop assignments to publicity to so much more. Thanks to these and to all who are and will be pitching in to put a great meeting together. I hope to see many of you there.

Last month in my article, I noted the generosity of the Heart of Texas Association in putting together many hygiene kits for Back Bay Mission. However, the count I gave was too low. When I finished adding the materials bought with Association funds and took the kits out to Biloxi, the final count was 83 kits! I also have extra supplies that have been donated and will go out when **Linda Coats** and **Anne Wehrly** drive the kits given at the SCC Annual Meeting to Back Bay Mission. We also look forward to your generosity and to that of the churches of the South Central Conference as we receive your Church World Service school kits. I know many people will be grateful to receive these wonderful gifts.

On the last Sunday in April, **Jerry Carpenter** and Weimar UCC celebrated his retirement together with a lovely worship service. **Jerry** sings sometimes during his preaching -- his parting song to the congregation was "Friends are Friends Forever" by **Michael W. Smith**. It was a fitting and wonderful end to his 14 year ministry among his fine friends at Weimar. Afterward, the church served a delicious lunch in their new kitchen and fellowship hall. It was a privilege for me to be there to join with them for their loving send off to **Jerry** and **Doris** as they move to their new home in Tyler.

I will be working from my extended family home in the Berkshire Mountains in the western part of Massachusetts for a short time in mid June (approximately June 15th - 20th) and from July 4th -- August 4th. The location is rural, without cell service except when we go to the nearby town to shop, meaning that I can't return cell phone calls quickly. For those who want to reach me, we do have high speed internet service, so I would ask that you email me at lizknash@gmail.com, and I will call you back, if needed, on our landline. For two weeks at the end of June and early July, I will be on vacation (on a boat in Alaska waters) and will only have occasional cell/email access. I thank the Heart of Texas Board for supporting me in this period long distance work to be able to spend time with family.

Today, I will be attending a webinar about best practices for churches when a registered sex offender wants to join. Many of our churches have had the dilemma of how to offer Christ's welcome to all while also being wise, caring, and careful when a registered sex offender wants to join. I hope to gain resources and understanding to share with you about this kind of situation should it come up in your church.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Association Minister

Personals

by Pat Oakes

The highly anticipated talent show of May 4, 2018, lived up to all of the hype providing all performers and attendees a delightful evening of fun and fellowship. Many thanks to **Nodie Murphy** (otherwise known as The Arm Twister) who organized the whole shebang. Keeping things going with levity and humor was Master of Ceremonies **Dennis Murphy** aided by the Timer and Award Distributor **Lynne Lemley**. The coveted awards were given to participants (ages 3-90!) as they completed their acts—a choice of a kazoo or a well-used Pilgrim hymnal. The Accompanist-in-Chief was **Jonathan Geer**, **Jaime Hadley** was the Electronics Expert and Soup Chef, **Sara Ross** was the Chili Cooker, **Pat Oakes** was the Dessert Storm Trooper, and **Betty Bodman** and **Joy Penticuff** were the Food Wranglers. After supper in the fellowship hall, we all adjourned to the sanctuary where we started off with the trio accompanying the Do It Yourself Choir in a number entitled. “Please Help Me.” **Pat Oakes** read two **Shel Silverstein** poems—one with a Yankee accent and another with a Mississippi drawl. Soprano **Amy Harris** sang a lovely operatic number. **Ruth Koenig** (who knew she was a stand-up comic!) did a bit with “Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?” **Nodie** led the children’s choir (**William Harris**, **Vivienne Zercher**, and **Ena** and **Naomi Rutherford**) in “I think You’re Wonderful.” **Lucy Erda** told a powerful story and **Jonathan Zercher** sang a song. Young **Atlas Hawver**, dressed in his spider-man costume, sang his rendition of “Who Let the Dogs Out?” **René Slataper**, **Joy Penticuff**, **Carolyn Thompson**, and **Andrea Low** staged a parable. **Sarah Darter** led the audience in a hand-dance, part of a technique that **Sarah** is learning called InterPlay-- followed by **Edgar Cavasos** who played the guitar—his first recital. Sara Ross and Amy Harris played a lively string duo tango accompanied by **Jonathan**. **Mel Oakes** shared an interesting quiz about the history of the UT physics department. **Jonathan Geer** played an original composition he composed for his recent wedding. **Shaela** and **Bryan Rutherford** sang a soulful duet followed by **Beth Placek** who told a story from the first book of The Lord of the Ring series by **J.R.R. Tolkien**. **Bill Beardall** got toes tapping with his yodeling, guitar playing, and singing.

Barbara Burnham, assisted by **Chester Rosson** (who has recuperated well from his recent surgery) told us about “Project Linus”—she makes simple blankets (deftly displayed by **Chester**) to be given to needy children by groups who help with children in distress. **Linnaea Arnett** played her guitar and sang. **René Slataper** played his guitar and **Harrison Tucker** read several of his award-winning haikus. The grand finale was **Chencho Flores** playing a lively number on his accordion. Then everyone adjourned to the fellowship hall where **Sara Ross** was surprised by a slightly late (the actual date is Dec. 15) 80th birthday celebration complete with a cake and one of **Nodie’s** famous songs—**Sara** was definitely **Nodied**—a new verb in the church lexicon!!

May 6th was a stellar day for our church youth—it was Youth Sunday, an annual event, held this year at University Christian Church and next year at University Baptist Church. The three churches host our joint youth group, but our sanctuary is too small to accommodate everyone for the Sunday service. We make up for that by having our fabulous trio play and our choir joins the other two choirs for some beautiful music. **Rev. Stephane Cooper** from University Baptist Church, **Rev. Chuck Kutz-Marks** from University Christian Church, and **Rev. Tom VandeStadt** from the Congregational Church of Austin opened the service with greetings and announcements. (cont. on next page)



5/6/18 Preparing for communion at University Christian Church during the Youth Sunday service -- Alden Harris 3rd from the left, senior Austen McClean, Zoe Disler -- Harrison Tucker far right

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

We had two young folks participating—7th grader **Harrison Tucker** and 9th grader **Alden Harris**. **Harrison** led the call to worship and he and **Zoe Disler** led the children’s sermon. **Alden Harris** gave the prayer of thanksgiving. The 8 youths ranging from 7th grade to a graduating senior helped with the serving of communion to the congregation. **Alden Harris** led the benediction. After the uplifting service, a delicious lunch was served to everyone in the church fellowship hall.

Debby Kohrt participated in another of her Mexico Smiles trips in May. Check out this Website for more information about this amazing group by looking <http://www.smilesinternationalfoundation.org/home0.aspx>. They had another successful Mission in Cabo San Lucas, **Mexico**. **Debby** notes that it is such an honor to be with this group—it is hard work, but so rewarding!



5/2018 Nurse Debby Kohrt holding one of the children going into surgery -- with Debby is Ben, an Anesthesia Fellow from Michigan.

On May 13th we welcomed our new “red hymnal” into our pews with a service featuring music from it. Our “Glory to God” hymnal has many things to offer our worship experience—old, familiar hymns; new inspiring ones; songs we’ve long known but never had in our hymnals (like “Dona nobis pacem”). Over 40 hymnals have already been dedicated, but it is not too late to remember a loved one or to honor a friend. Let **Joy Penticuff** or **Betty Bodman** know if you would like to add a name or two (\$20.00 per hymnal).



5/2/18 Way to go, Caleb! Caleb finishing up 4th grade at Altamira Academy, he was named Most Valuable Player of the Altamira Aviators basketball team!
His family is very proud of him!

Seventh grader **Harrison Tucker** is the goal keeper for his school team (St. Francis Wolfpack) and his Austin rec team (NASA Fury). Recently, in the school tournament game, still tied 2-2 after 10 minutes overtime, the game went to ‘shootouts’ to determine the winner. In a penalty shootout- five players are selected from each team to individually attempt to score against the opposing team’s goal keeper from the penalty line. **Harrison** was selected as a shooter for his team in addition to holding the position of goalkeeper. Not only did **Harrison** make his penalty shot, he defended all attempts by the other team to score! Final score: 5-2. **Harrison** enjoyed hero status at school all day! (Photo on next page)

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes



5/18 Harrison Tucker blocking a shot at a recent soccer game

on sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality. **René** is planning on a second session in the fall—Transgender 201.



5/20/18 René Slataper leading a discussion on human sexuality after church

Barbara Burnham's employer, Deer Oaks Behavioral Health, has asked her to pilot a program of telepsychology--providing psychological services to residents in rural nursing homes that don't otherwise have access to services. The nursing home is in the small town of Olton, **Texas**, near Lubbock. She'll be setting up her computer in her living room with a bookcase as backdrop. The home will have a tablet computer, which will be moved from room to room by staff. They actually have electronic medical records, which she'll be able to access from home. There is special, secure software that looks something like Face Time, which she has never used (or Skype either!). She's excited about entering this brave new world, and she hopes the residents of the home will be, too.

Many thanks to **René Slataper** who led an information and discussion session after church on May 20th for interested folks on the topic he called Transgender 101. **René**, who is transgender, helped the participants to start thinking in a less binary way, to think about sensitive use of pronouns, and to focus

Former church pianist **Aaron Carter-Enyi** reports that things are going well for him and his family. His wife **Quintina** is working on a Master's in Ethnomusicology at the University of Georgia and is starting to miss home (she hasn't visited Nigeria in over three years now)--hopefully they will make it to Nigeria soon. Their one-year-old son **Arinze** is walking and babbling. (cont. on next page)



One-year-old Arinze Carter-Enyi, son of our former pianist Aaron Carter-Enyi and his wife Quintina

Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

With both parents being ethnomusicologists, surely he will be singing soon! Aaron's mom **Karen** is in **Ohio** with three grandsons (his sister's) and enjoying being a grandmother. She also does workshops at a nature center for school children. **Aaron** is almost 2/3 of the way through an 18 month / \$150,000 grant from the American Council for Learned Societies (ACLS) / Mellon Foundation for this project.

Dennis Schneider and his late wife **Kazuko** were at the church in the early to mid-1970s. After **Dennis** finished his PhD in German, he and **Kazuko** and their infant daughter **Takako** went back to Tokyo, Japan, where Dennis still lives today. Of course, our church celebrated Pentecost, but Dennis shared what his service was like at the UCC Tokyo Union Church. They have members from all over the world. At their Pentecost service, they read Acts II in 40 or so languages (taking turns, a verse each). **Dennis** read the German one although there were native German speakers in the congregation. They had Hindi, several African languages including Afrikaans by the pastor's wife (they're from South Africa and both fabulous people—he did **Kazuko's** memorial service beautifully, stressing, as **Dennis** requested, the story of Ruth about following and faithfulness, etc.). Anyway, **Pastor Johann** said in his sermon that God did not reverse Babel at Pentecost, God sanctified all languages. **Dennis** wanted to take that and tell some of his compatriots what they should do with it in this day of "speak English or go home" ideas. Anyway, Pentecost was colorful and people were encouraged to wear red or a native costume. **Dennis** laments that they did not have any Lederhosen to wear for the occasion. The service was a rainbow of sight and sound.

Mel and Pat Oakes had a wonderful one week trip to the **D.C.** area to visit their daughter **Sarah** and her husband **Joe**—it had been more than 3 years since **Pat** and **Mel** had been up that way. While in Arlington, they celebrated **Mel's** birthday and **Mother's Day**. There was a party for **Mel** on Friday, and on Sunday **Pat** and **Mel** and **Sarah** and **Joe** took a boat cruise on the Potomac from Alexandria to Georgetown, stopping for a delicious lunch in Georgetown and then back on the boat to Alexandria

— a celebratory treat thanks to daughters **Beth** and **Sarah**. The highlight of the trip was visiting the Museum of African American History and Culture—a heart-wrenching and uplifting, memorable experience which they recommend to everyone. They also attended a confirmation service at the National Cathedral where a friend of **Sarah's** was preaching the sermon, went on a homes tour, saw a number of friends and several relatives—and enjoyed **Sarah** and **Joe's** superb hospitality. They celebrated their 55th anniversary the day after they got home and enjoyed celebrating anniversaries with **Reuel** and **Liz Nash** after church on the 20th.



5/13/18 Joe and Sarah with Mel and Pat on the Potomac River cruise



5/20/18 Mel and Pat Oakes with Liz and Reuel Nash cutting a wedding anniversary cake--55 years on the 18th for the Oakeses and 39 for the Nashes on the 19th

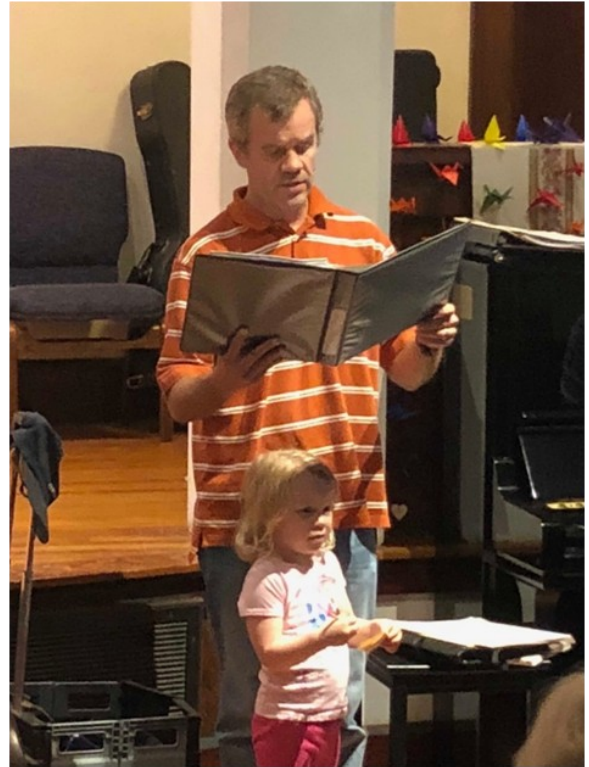
Personals (cont)

by Pat Oakes

David and **Edith Scott** from Scotland were at our church in 1984-5 with their son **David, Jr.**, and daughter **Susan**. **Edith** writes, "I can't believe how the time passes. I was a relatively young thing when we came to **Austin** (33), but here I am now about to retire on June 22nd!! A reminder, if one was needed, is that time is our most precious resource. **David** and I are heading out on a cruise of Europe on 25th June, calling at some new ports and also some familiar ones, so we're looking forward to that. My granddaughter **Dannielle**, (**Susan's** eldest), starts high school in the August term. Scary! I pray for all new beginnings, wherever they are and for whomever they are for."



5/4/18 Andrea Low helped herself to some of Jaime Hadley's amazing clam chowder at supper before the talent show



5/4/18 Jonathan Zercher (with daughter Vivienne) sang for us all at the talent show



5/4/18 Linnaea Arnett played her guitar and sang for the talent show

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



5/4/18 Tess Howicz sang a song for the talent show



5/4/18 Bill Beardall yodeled, sang, and played his way into our hearts at the talent show



5/4/18 Nodie Murphy leading the children in a song at the talent show--William Harris, Vivienne Zercher with her Dad Jonathan providing moral support, and Ena and Naomi Rutherford



5/4/18 Sara Ross and Amy Harris played a lively tango accompanied by Jonathan at the talent show

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



5/4/18 Chencho Flores and his famous accordion as the last act of the talent show



5/4/18 Sara Ross blowing out the candles for her (somewhat belated) 80th birthday cake at the surprise celebration following the talent show

History Corner

There are a lot of new folks in the church these days who may have never been to our conference's Slumber Falls Camp and Retreat Center on the Guadalupe River near New Braunfels. Over the years we have had a number of retreats there—and many of our young people have gone to camp there. Here is the Web site if you would like to investigate more <https://slumberfalls.org>. Below you will see pictures of some of the retreats we have had. Marilyn Vaché was instrumental in planning many of the more recent retreats.



1989? Slumber Falls retreat Pat Oakes, Mel Oakes, Ellen Deisler, Paul Deisler. Clark Hubbs behind Paul, Steve Domingue, Norma Hawes, Setsuko Kaneda, Nodie Murphy, Cathy Hubbs, Yoshi Kaneda

One memorable retreat probably 40 years ago involved Sara Ross. It was the custom then for us to purchase the food in Austin and do our own cooking while we were there. Sara was in the kitchen getting ready to cook along with a number of others. Sara went to light the large gas oven, unaware that there was a slight leak. Sara lit the match—and suddenly there was a loud *whoosh*—and an astonished Sara emerged with singed eyebrows and much shorter bangs!! Dinner was served on time, however.



4/24/10 Chow time at Slumber Falls--Matt Blackstock, Joan Mueller, Bill Beardall, Sarah Bentley, Bob Breihan, Mel Oakes, Robin Chapman



4/24/10 A beautiful afternoon at Slumber Falls



4/28/07 Dan Jeffery, Tom VandeStadt, Jaime Hadley--soon to be baptized in the Guadalupe River at Slumber Falls

History Corner, (cont)



Church retreat at Slumber Falls--2007— Dave and Sara Ross, Doyal Pinkard, Hannah Norton, Greg Futch, Tom VandeStadt, Nodie Murphy, Barbara Burnham, Marilyn Vaché, Marilyn Harris, Dan Jeffery, Jaime Hadley, Vic Appel, Matt Blackstock, Mel Oakes



June, 2013 A great time was had at Slumber Falls ECO Camp--Beth Gleason, director, Annie Nash, counselor, Giovanni Fracasso, camper, Nancy Edison, teacher, and Becky Nash, counselor