

THE VISITOR

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



The International Union for the Conservation of Nature recently published a report on our planet's oceans. For years, we've been burning fossil fuels, releasing heat-trapping CO2 into the atmosphere and heating up the oceans. The oceans have absorbed most of the heat that we've generated—90%. If that heat had stayed in the atmosphere rather than being absorbed by the oceans, the surface of the earth would've warmed by 36C in the past century and we wouldn't be here today.

By absorbing our heat, the oceans have saved our lives for now, but other life forms are paying the price. We're causing a mass migration of sea life, forcing fish and other sea creatures to leave their habitats because their water is too warm or too acidic, or there's no longer food for them to eat or another refugee species is invading their space and eating them. These living creatures are underwater climate change refugees, experiencing the havoc, suffering and death that often precedes and accompanies mass migrations; 550 types of fish and invertebrates are threatened with extinction.

You may not think that an underwater creature like a fish or a turtle is a climate change refugee. But why not? Why do we reserve that designation exclusively for members of our own species? Why can't we acknowledge that fish forced to migrate because of climate change are climate change refugees? That any mammal, reptile or bird forced to migrate because of climate change is a climate change refugee? All over the planet right now, we're forcing fish, mammals, reptiles and birds to migrate because of the heat that we're generating, with all the havoc, suffering and death that often precedes and accompanies mass migrations; over 16 million species are known to be threatened with extinction.

What impact will the warming seas have on the earth's human population? Billions of people on earth rely heavily on food that comes from the sea. The IUCN report warns that the amount of food people can harvest from the sea in areas like Southeast Asia will drop by one-third by 2050, as the human population continues to increase. Warmer waters may contribute to an increase in disease and food poisoning, and will produce more numerous, more severe and more destructive hurricanes. Then there's sea level rise, which will displace large numbers of people.

Dan Loffoley, one of the IUCN report's lead authors, remarked in an article in *The Guardian*, "The overall outlook is pretty gloomy...We are locking ourselves into a future where a lot of the poorer people in the world will miss out." In other words and more bluntly, a lot of the world's poorer people have no future.

Just as underwater climate change refugees are migrating through the seas today, human climate change refugees will increasingly traverse the globe in the not-too-distant future. It's likely that sea-level rise alone

will displace millions from small island nations, Bangladesh, Egypt and every other nation on earth with sizeable populations hugging low coasts. Africa will likely suffer from increased drought, food scarcity and the disappearance of drinking water, forcing millions to move. A long-term drought could descend upon Mexico and Central America, making parts of that region uninhabitable. Most of these people from Bangladesh, Africa, Mexico and Central America are the world's poorer people. Where on earth will they go? Or will they miss out on the future?

The United Nations Refugee Agency reports there were 63.5 million displaced people in the world in 2015, a record high; that's one out of every 113 people on earth. The International Organization for Migration estimates that by itself, climate change could create an additional 25 million to 1 billion displaced people by 2050; 200 million is the number often cited. Look at the current refugee crisis in Europe to get a glimpse of what a bigger and more chaotic global refugee crisis could look like in the future, with even more of havoc, suffering and death. A gloomy prospect, indeed.

The question is, how bright will those who bear light shine in that gloom?

Our CCA Endowment Fund: A Wonderful Time to Support It

The Board of Trustees is encouraging you to consider contributing to the CCA Endowment Fund in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one. Due to the generosity of an anonymous donor, all contributions will be matched up to \$10,000! This is a unique and wonderful opportunity to strengthen our church's ministry and presence in the world, now and in the future, by building up our CCA Endowment Fund. During our worship service on October 30, All Saints Sunday, we will recognize all those who have been remembered and honored through contributions to the CCA Endowment Fund.

Fall Book Reading and Discussion

Nobody: Casualties of America's War on the Vulnerable, From Ferguson to Flint and Beyond

This Fall, Tom will lead a discussion of the book, *Nobody, Casualties of America's War on the Vulnerable, From Ferguson to Flint and Beyond*, by Marc Lamont Hill. Hill's book examines the interlocking political, economic, social and cultural dynamics that systemically disadvantage those "marked as poor, black, brown, immigrant, queer, or trans," those who, in Hill's words, are Nobodies. Hill is the Distinguished Professor of African American Studies at Morehouse College, and prior to that, held positions at Columbia University and Temple University. If you're interested, pick up a copy of the book (it is on Kindle) and begin reading. We'll start the discussion on Sunday November 6 after worship.

Church Financial Update

At the April 10, 2016 Congregational Meeting, the congregation approved a reduced budget based on expected income. The Trustees promised to carefully consider all discretionary expenses throughout the year with the goal of having income match or exceed expenses in 2016. The Trustees were also optimistic that the installation of additional insulation in Fall 2015 would result in lower utility expenditures during 2016. So how are we doing?

As of August 31, income to the General Fund is running slightly behind expenses for the year, for a deficit of -\$1,364 (note that this includes the summer months when income is traditionally lower than the rest of the year). Income is now behind 2015 by ~\$13,000, while expenses are lower by ~\$10,000. We are at or under our year-to-date budget in all categories, with expenditures at 89% of the year-to-date budget. Of significance, we have spent ~\$1,400 less on utilities in 2016 compared to the same period in 2015.

	Jan 1 – Aug 31, 2016	Jan 1 – Aug 31, 2015
Total Income to Budget	\$139,606	\$152,817
Total Budget Expenses	\$140,970	\$151,323
Difference	-\$1,364	\$1,494

Clearly, the reduced budget was necessary and the “extra” that you have pledged or given is also vital. Thank you all for your help in maintaining the good financial health of our church.

Gail Christeson
Treasurer

Church Leadership

Trustee Co-Chairs	Don Brown & Bill Campbell
Deacons Chair	Jennifer Howicz
Outreach Team	Reuel Nash & John Goff
Moderator Co-Chairs	Barbara Burnham & Bill Beardall
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Pam Tucker
Christian Education	Rachel Dietz
Coordinators	John Burlinson
Clerk	Betty Bodman
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmistress	Sara Ross
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

Church Announcements

Say “Hi” to your Outreach Coordinators

John Goff and Reuel Nash are serving as “Outreach Coordinators” this year. As most of you may be aware, the outreach coordinator position is actually quite new. Not long ago we had a Board of Christian Outreach that oversaw our outreach activities. Or at least tried to. The truth is, most of our outreach activities – Freeze Night Shelter, Front Porch Lunch, Micah 6 Food pantry, Green Team, Care Team – are autonomous and self-directed among a dedicated team of volunteers. Outreach happens at our church whether or not we have a Board or a Coordinator. Quoting shamelessly from an insurance company commercial: it’s what we do. In a recent effort to streamline our Church’s governance, we therefore decided, along with Christian Education (which now operates with paid staff), to eliminate the Boards and replace them with two coordinators each.

So: what does an outreach coordinator DO in our church? Or, better yet: what SHOULD an outreach coordinator do? As we see it, we have 3 primary responsibilities:

1. Outreach Coordinators are representatives of, and advocates for, the outreach mission or our church. One of us sits on Coordinating Council, and it is our job to ensure that outreach concerns factor into the church’s decision-making. We are YOUR representatives. If you have any sort of concern about, or idea for outreach activities, speak to Reuel or John and we can ensure that it gets a hearing.

2. Outreach Coordinators are conduits of information regarding outreach. We keep the Coordinating Council informed about outreach activities. We inform the outreach teams about decisions of the coordinating council that affect them. But perhaps our most important function in this regard is to keep the Congregation informed about outreach activities and opportunities for participation. This is where we recognized the most room for improvement – which begins with a renewed effort to present outreach moments. These are indeed good, but we can also do a

lot better in making sure that outreach information is published more often in the church’s newsletter and highlighted on our web page.

3. Outreach Coordinators provide advice to the Trustees regarding our Cooperative Responsibilities budget. Until this year we have only had to recommend minor modifications, but with the large budget shortfall this year, we have had to manage sharp reductions in some of our donations. Those of you who were at last Sunday’s congregational meeting are aware that there was a strong consensus for trying to offset the larger cuts – such as OCWM, Huston-Tillotson, CUE - with special directed offerings through the year. We coordinators were tasked with organizing these events, so this is something that we will incorporate into our budgetary responsibilities.

So there you have it – that’s what an Outreach Coordinator does (or WILL do). Don’t hesitate to chat with John or Reuel about any outreach topic on your mind.

The Front Porch Lunch ministry is in GREAT need of a few more **volunteers** to serve lunches. Lunch is served to area homeless (mostly Life-Works guests) every Thursday of the month in our Fellowship Hall. If you are interested, contact John Goff or our church Administrator, Rimma Aguirre.

Micah 6, the consortium of 11 University area churches working together to meet the needs of the homeless, need food and servers for its weekly **Sunday afternoon drop-in center** at University Baptist church. The drop-in needs volunteers who can **cook** a healthy dish for about 25 people, or come to the drop-in center to **help serve** those dishes. More information on the drop-in center can be found at: <http://m6sydic.weebly.com/>

Micah 6 also needs clothes for its **Fig Leaf clothing distribution center**. Donations can be brought to our Sunday morning worship. If you have any questions or need more information, please see our church’s Micah 6 representative, Whit Bodman.

Personals

by Pat Oakes



9/11/16 Newly ordained Rev. Beth Gleason and her mom Jane Gleason (visiting from New England) at the reception at Trinity Church of Austin

Beth Gleason was ordained on **Sunday, September 11**, at **Trinity Church** (newly affiliated with the UCC) at a wonderful ecumenical service. When Beth came to Austin in 1998, she first joined Trinity UMC, but then found her way to us. Within the last year, Trinity has become part of the UCC, so Beth saw it as an opportunity to have a joint service. In the UCC the local church and Association approves and ordains a ministerial candidate once they have secured a calling as a pastor. Beth has been called by **Christ Congregational in Ft. Morgan, CO**. As people were gathering in the sanctuary, they enjoyed a great slideshow put together by **Reuel Nash**. The service started with a trumpet processional played by **Dick Muehr** from **Weimar UCC**. He was followed by more than a dozen pastors who helped with the ordination process and an imam and a rabbi who also participated in the service. **Liz Nash** preached with world of wisdom for Beth as she

starts this new phase of her life. Beth has been very involved with the wider church and religious community, so many ministers know her. Our trio provided the music and our choir sang with the Trinity choir. Beth's mom **Jane Gleason** placed the stole around Beth's neck after the laying on of hands--everyone participated in that. A lovely reception organized by our own **Jaime Hadley** and Trinity's **Gary Brown** followed the service of ordination. **Rev. Gleason** preached at our church on **September 25th** and left for Ft. Morgan on the 28th. Godspeed, Beth!!



Here's five-day-old Franklin Henry Brown. He's been perky from his start!

Congratulations to **Don and Sharon Brown** whose grandson **Franklin Henry Brown** was born on **Monday, September 12**, and weighed in at **8 pounds 1 ounce**. Franklin is the son of **Andy** and his wife **Sara** and the baby brother of his "big" sister, 16-month-old **Hattie**. Sharon says, "All is well and happy! We're so lucky to have grandchildren who live here. It's our joy!"

Doris Williams will have an extended report for the Visitor next month, but she is delighted to be going to the brand new **Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture** in **Washington, D.C.** in late September.



9/16 Nancy Edison at the Bishop's palace, Orkney Islands, Scotland

One Sunday several months ago, **Nancy Edison** was telling **Beth Gleason** about her plan to go on an Elderhostel tour of **Scotland** where Nancy's father's family was from. Beth said that she had always wanted to go to Scotland, too, so they started planning the tour. They looked at the cost and figured they could do the tour on their own for less money. Ultimately Beth invited 2 of her friends, which brought the mini-tour group to 4. They were gone for 10 days--2 "across the pond" days and 8 for touring Scotland. They enjoyed seeing **Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh Castle, Sunday services at St. Giles Cathedral** and more. From **Edinburgh** they went to **Inverness, Loch Ness**, and then to the **Orkney Islands**, site of **Skara Brae**, a Neolithic community which predates the pyramids. They drove around the **Isle of Skye** which was beautiful and was also where they had the best meal of the trip. They stopped at a small restaurant, which as luck would have it, had a chef who had his own Michelin star who was just starting up his own business. A wonderful time was had by all.



9/16 Beth Gleason at Loch Ness, Scotland

Lynne and George Lemley are getting settled into their new home--complete with a fabulous pool. They moved more than a month ago from the home where they had lived for 16 years after deciding it was time to downsize. It wasn't planned this way, but they are delighted to say that they are now close neighbors of **Nodie and Dennis Murphy**, who live just about 5 houses away--around the corner and 4 houses down. The Lemleys' new address is **1705 Wildwood Dr., Round Rock, TX 78681**. Their home phone number is the same--512-336-1720. Their old house was scheduled to go on the market on September 20. In other Lemley news, **Jeffrey** should graduate with a **Master's of Architecture** degree from the **University of Houston** in **December**. His long-time girlfriend **Allison Edwards** has gotten an internship near **Paducah, TX**, working with horses on a big horse ranch. She earned an **agriculture degree** with an **equine specialty** and is looking forward to putting into practice all that she has learned. George is continuing to work with his business, **Lemley Data Services**.

Pat Oakes continues to recuperate from her two major back surgeries in **January** and **February** of this year. She is so grateful for all of the prayers and good wishes that have been sent her and **Mel's** way. She is beginning to walk on her own without a walker around the house and does very well out and about just holding on to Mel's hand. She is in training for a trip at the end of October to **San Francisco** for the wedding of Mel's nephew **Stuart** and his partner of 17 years, **Jay**, at the historic **San Francisco City Hall**. Training for the trip

Heart of Texas Association News

October

by Liz Nash

Friends Congregational Church has called the Rev. Trent Williams to be their new Associate Pastor. Trent is no stranger to Friends, since he was their seminary intern while a student at Brite Divinity School. He comes to Friends from serving as pastor at St. John's United Church of Christ in Egg Harbor City, New Jersey. Trent is a native of Waco and a Baylor graduate. He begins his ministry at Friends on Sunday, October 16th. I hope we will all be able to welcome him to the Heart of Texas Association. Congratulations to Friends Congregational and Trent on this joyous beginning.

We also have more good news in our Association. Rev. Ryan Hart has moved with his family to the Leander area and is starting a new church, Open Cathedral UCC, there. He comes to our Association from Claremont UCC in Claremont, California, where he served on the staff as youth minister. Ryan has a new church start grant from both the national UCC and from the New and Renewing Churches Committee of the South Central Conference. Open Cathedral just received its official designation as a UCC new church start in this conference, is meeting monthly in addition to gathering for activities, and has a good core group. They look forward to beginning to meet for weekly worship around Christmas, and are in the process of settling on a rented worship space. Ryan will be at our fall Heart of Texas Association Meeting. We will certainly want to offer him and his family welcome and support in this exciting and blessed endeavor.

I hope many of you will join us for our Fall Association Meeting at St. John's UCC in Burton on Saturday, October 29th, 10 am through lunch, with registration at 9:30. St. John's does not need us to RSVP. They will (as always) welcome all who come. Lunch will be fried chicken, with a cost of \$8 per person. We will have worship, a business meeting, a short program, and a chance to strengthen the

bonds among our churches. Come and gather with old and new friends to share this time together.

Rev. Ron Trimmer is leading a workshop on Evangelism on Saturday, October 22nd, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at Rolling Oaks Christian Church, 7150 Stahl Rd. in San Antonio. This workshop is part of the Clergy Leadership Institute, but is open to both lay leaders and clergy. The cost is only \$40, including lunch, if you register before October 15th. Ron is the pastor of Hope United Church in Georgetown and has had plenty of experience in evangelism as a church planter. In addition, he is now the director of the Texas Bible Chair Foundation, a continuing education ministry for laypeople and clergy in the Christian Church, Disciple of Christ. Ron invites and encourages us to come to learn about inviting and welcoming people into our churches on October 22nd.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash
Heart of Texas Association Minister

Personals (continued)

by Pat Oakes

includes walking up and down the hills in their **Barton Hills** neighborhood. Pat asks, "How do you get to San Francisco? Practice, practice, practice!!"



Priscilla Perkins Grew at Madame Tussaud's in London in June 2016

Priscilla Perkins Grew (who visits us from **Nebraska** sometimes), the geologist daughter of long-time member (1950s and 1960s) of the church and faculty member at **Huston Tillotson, Dr. James Perkins**, loves being retired and has done a lot of traveling. She was recently in **London** and visited **Madame Tussaud's** for the **Queen's 90th Birthday**. Further afield, she attended the **International Geological Congress in Cape Town, South Africa**, and was appointed as one of the 8 official voting **U.S. Delegates**. She was nominated in January by the **U.S. National Committee** as a candidate for **President** of the **International Union of Geological Sciences**. Although she didn't make it to the final ballot, it was a great honor.

Ruth Koenig has enjoyed several family occasions in the past few months, involving a **50th wedding anniversary** in **D.C.** in **February**, a reunion with 19 of her own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in **Ohio**, which was chaotic at times, but fun, and then another recent visit with nieces and nephews, also in Ohio. Her siblings are all gone and since she was the youngest in her family, she was close in age to her nieces and nephews, so has a good relationship with them and is a tie to their parents. This last Ohio visit was marred by



2016 Priscilla on Table Mountain above Cape Town, looking towards the Cape of Good Hope in the background.

the sudden death of her 49-year-old great nephew right before she went. Although a service was held in **California**, burial will be in **New Hampshire** next month, but she won't be going to that.

Some of you may remember **Rev. Wil Brown** and his wife **Hulen** who worshipped with us for some months about 15 years ago. When **Betsy** and **Rollin Russell** were here in early March for a visit, they made a trip to **New Braunfels** to visit their long-time friends who have lived for the past 4 years at **Eden-Hill Retirement Community** (under the auspices of the UCC). Recently Hulen was at **Zilker Park** with a group of folks who are learning **Esperanto**, an artificial language based on Indo-European roots which was created in the late 19th century. It is one of the classes that Hulen is taking at Eden-Hill. Currently, Wil and Hulen are volunteering in **Biloxi, Mississippi**, at the **Back Bay Mission**. They get to spend two months (Sept-Oct) there as long-term volunteers through **UCC Partners In Service**. This is their fourth trip. Wil also serves on the **BBM** board of directors. In **New Braunfels** they are members at **Faith UCC** where **Scott Martin** is their pastor.

History Corner

by Pat and Mel Oakes

The congregation was delighted to see our former cellist **Colin Ferguson** and his wife **Eli** (pronounced Ellie) in church on **Sunday, September 4**. They were celebrating their **1st wedding anniversary** which was on the **5th** and were remembering what a beautiful service **Tom** led for their wedding last year at their home in **Bertram**. The congregation applauded when they announced that they are expecting their first child in **February!**

Beth Placek reports that she had a wonderful trip to **England** recently. A highlight was visiting the small town of **Church Stretton** near **Shrewsbury** in **Shropshire**, famed for its beautiful walks through the countryside. Her husband **Chencho Flores** is still playing the accordion with **Los Pinkies** but now has started his own band called **Borracho Boys**. Chencho is enjoying life and making new music.

In late September the Trustees shared with the congregation and the extended church family that this year an anonymous donor has offered to match up to \$10,000 in new donations to the Congregational Church of Austin Endowment Fund. Over the past several years our church has received several generous contributions that have enabled our church to begin a **CCA Endowment Fund**. The names in the current endowment fund may not be familiar to most folks in the church but for those of us who have been around awhile, we know who they are. On **Sunday, October 30, All Saints Sunday**, during the service, we will remember/recognize all those who have been honored with a donation..

John McNeely lived to be 100+ years old (he died in 1982), he emigrated from Ireland when he was a boy, he sang in the church choir for many, many years, and when he died, he left a part of his estate to the church. It was wonderful to visit with John--like talking to a history book.



John McNeely at the age of 100--Oct 12, 1981

Return Service Requested

November Visitor Deadline—October 19, 2015

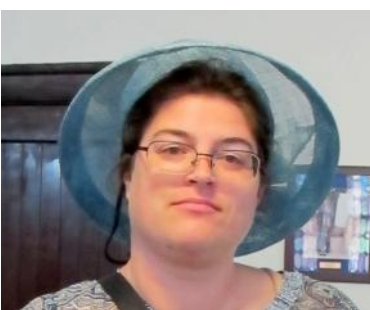
History Corner, continued

by Pat and Mel Oakes

Bert Miller was pastor of our church from 1950-1956. His wife **Mary Margaret** died in 2014 and he reconnected with the church when Mel Oakes was working on the history of church pastors, Bert decided to add to the endowment fund saying, "In memory of Mary Margaret Miller and all her church friends from the years 1950-1956." Cathy and Clark Hubbs joined the church during Bert's tenure.



12/1963 Mary Margaret Miller, wife of pastor Bert Miller who served the church from 1950-1956



Isabel Cole in July 2013

members of **United Christian Church** here in Austin.

Isabel Cole was a brilliant, unique young woman who worshipped with us for several years. She always wore wonderful hats to church. Tragically, she died very suddenly as the result of a seizure in 2014. Her parents are

Marie Scheel was the choir director at the church for almost 30 years and her husband **Weldon** (called Dutch by many) sang in the choir. Both were music educators in AISD. There is a medallion in a window dedicated to their memory in the sanctuary. Marie died in 2015 at the age of 100.



2006 Marie Scheel, former choir director, at age 92