

# THE VISITOR

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

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**Rev. Thomas J. VandeStadt**



**W**hen I think of stewardship, a number of words that I relate to stewardship spring to mind: gift, gratitude, generosity, justice, and peace. And one phrase, "give us this day our daily bread," encapsulates the relationship between these words.

When we pray for our daily bread, we acknowledge that our bread comes ultimately from God—source of seed, soil, sun and rain, source from which the sacred energy of life arises within and around us. We may plant the seed, harvest the grain, knead the dough, bake the loaf, or buy the finished product from our local store, but we're not the source of our daily bread. Nor are we the source of our own lives. We're recipients of a generous gift called life, and dependent upon all from God's Earth that sustains our lives.

When we pray for our daily bread, we acknowledge our corporate need for bread, and our responsibility to share this bread. We pray for *our* bread, not *my* bread. Every single person in creation is dependent upon God and *other people* for bread. Christian mystic Meister Eckhart was keen to our radical interdependence when he wrote, "There is no such thing as 'my' bread. All bread is 'ours,' and it is given to others through me, and to me through others. For not only bread but all things necessary for sustenance in this life are on loan to us with others, and because of others, and for others, and to others through us."

In the Bible, holiness includes the just distribution of the harvest so that everyone has sufficient bread to feed their hunger, while un-holiness includes an unjust distribution that enables a few to hoard more than they need while many scrape by without enough. In the Biblical drama, this unholy reality becomes the dominant one, a reality God's prophets judge and condemn. When Jesus preaches the kingdom of God on earth, he preaches the overturning of this dominant reality by a new one in which all recognize their dependence on God and their interdependence with one another, one in which all who hunger receive the bread that is their right.

When we pray for our daily bread, I'm reminded that Earth doesn't belong to us, we belong to Earth and to the One who created Earth, who in a spirit of love and generosity provides all we need to flourish and enjoy life with the provision that we share what we harvest from Earth in a manner that's just. This is also how I think of stewardship. Stewardship includes the wisdom of knowing what belongs to whom, gratitude to the giver for what's been given, the generosity of open hearts and hands, and a commitment to justice. That's not

to say I'm a paragon of wisdom, gratitude, generosity, and justice. I'm not. But stewardship is a practice that incorporates all these related spiritual disciplines. Ideally, we practice them together as Christ's church. Together, we acknowledge to God to whom we belong, express our gratitude to God for the gift of life and one another, open our hearts and hands to God and one another, and commit to God and one another to work for justice on God's Earth. For me, these are the spiritual disciplines that contribute to creating peace on Earth.

Stewardship includes, but isn't limited to, pledging money to the church. By pledging money to the church, we promise to financially support the Christian community that encourages and supports our ongoing spiritual practice, the community in which we together pray "give us this day our daily bread," and the community in which we seek to discern and live out the depth and breadth of this prayer.

This year, Pledge Sunday will be November 13. Before the 13th, please take some time to reflect on what stewardship means to you, and how much your church means to you.

<b>Church Leadership</b>	
Trustee Chair	Don Brown
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
Coordinator	John Burlinson
Clerk	Betty Bodman
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmistress	Sara Ross
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

### **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 Announcements

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### 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



**10/16 Doris Williams** headed into the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

**Doris Williams** attended the dedication by **President Obama** of the **National Museum of African American History and Culture** in Washington, DC on **September 24-26, 2016**. She was especially excited about the trip because her undergraduate degree is in history. She was eager to see the artifacts and documents chronicling African American contributions to this country. Doris noted that there were so many people in the Museum when she was there. The only way to be admitted was to have signed up in advance for free tickets. The Museum is currently booked up through February 2017. However if you were one of the many wealthy contributors, they were directed to a different website for free tickets. Each visitor got 6 free tickets. The overwhelming majority of visitors were African-Americans and Doris wondered why this is the case. She says that she has come to realize that most African-Americans are not taught their own history in the schools and this is why the lines inside and outside were so long and why there was so much interest in the slightest detail. Many African-Americans were not familiar with the story of **Emmitt Till**. The lines to see Emmitt Till's casket were over 2 hours long! Many were fascinated by artifacts from a sunken slave ship, a slave cabin, etc. She was told that the most prized item in the Museum was **Nat Turner's Bible**. The Museum also consisted of contemporary items and history but by far the most interesting and fascinating parts of the Museum were the slavery sections. She was surprised and disap-

pointed by the lack of precious artifacts, i.e., paintings, folk art, carvings, inventions, etc. She felt it was as if African-Americans contributed nothing of value. She believes that the valuables, the inventions, the true contribution African-Americans have made to this country are still out there somewhere. She also believes these contributions are in the hands of the initial slaveholders' descendants! When these items are finally given up to the Museum it will truly reflect ALL of the contributions African-Americans have made to this country!

**Beth Gleason** sends a great big hello from northeastern **Colorado** and encourages all of us to come and see her any time. She does point out that it is about to get pretty cold up her way, however!



**10/16 Beth Gleason's photo** contributed by **Joan Mueller**

**Tapestry Singers** will present their **Fall Concert "Spellbound"** on **Saturday, November 19th** at **7:30 p.m.** at **St. Matthew's Episcopal Church**, 8134 Mesa Drive at the corner of Steck and Mesa. Come join them for a magically good time. Tickets are on sale now at the Tapestry web site. Admission is \$15.00/\$10.00 for Senior/Student/Alumnae. <http://www.tapestrysingers.org/concerts/buy-tickets/> **Lucy Hanouille**, a member of the choir, will be singing with main choir and the auditioned choir, **Loose Threads**. She would love to see you there!

**Harrison Tucker** ran in his first cross country meet on **Oct 2**. In the photo, he is the one in the middle with the red shoe laces. It was hilly and harder than he expected. He wanted to quit, but sister **Savanna** started running with him for the last mile and kept him going through the finish!



**10/2/2016 Harrison Tucker is in the center with the red shoelaces**

We are enjoying getting acquainted with **Faye** and **Andy Dierksen**, who moved here a year ago from **Chadron, NE**, a little town in the NW panhandle of Nebraska. Faye met Andy when she was attending **Chadron State** for her Bachelor of Arts, Justice Studies degree and they were married in the **Nebraska National Forest** in **Halsey, NE** on **9/1/2012**. They absolutely love living in Austin. They love it so much, in fact, they convinced their dear friend **Doug Ingalsbe** to move here. Doug moved here on **10/4/2016** to make a change and explore other places to live. Andy works for **Reflections Remodel** doing mostly home renovations. Faye works as an executive legal assistant for **The Law Office of Hubert Bell, Jr.** and will graduate with her **Master's of Science in Organizational Management** in December. Doug worked as a quality assurance manager in Chadron and is currently having a number of job interviews looking for just the right job for him. Faye, Andy, and Doug are already involved in the work of the church as they recently attended the **Austin Interfaith Accountability Session** at **Mount Olive Baptist Church**.

We haven't seen a lot of the **Quisenberry** family in the past few months, but they are very busy with activities for 10-year-old twins **Scarlett** and **Juliet**. Scarlett is really involved with gymnastics and as of late October had participated in 4 meets. With 3 of the 4 all four family members attended. Scarlett also works out 4 days a week and extends the training with an advanced ballet class on Saturday mornings. The meets continue until early February, then break until late August. So at least they get some time off! Of the 8 meets of the year, 7 are in Texas and only 2 of those are as far as Dallas. Most of her competitions are on a Saturday evening in places like Boerne, San Antonio, or the Dallas area. They are discovering this is one expensive activity. The most distant event takes place in Hilton Head in January. Only she and **Shannon** will go to that one. Scarlett is so happy and performing well. Juliet is enjoying being in a dance company. She dances 3 days a week, but her performances and competitions are mostly in late spring. Thankfully they are all in the local area. Juliet's specialty is tap dancing, but she also plays piano and sings. Shannon loves getting into their activities with them and it gives her great pleasure to watch them do anything creative and challenging. Gymnastics is the first sport Shannon has ever actually needed to pay attention to, and it's so cool for her to watch the scores flash up after every competitor. It's a whole new world for Shannon, who was a musical theatre gal. **Jason's** college girlfriend was a gymnast at the **University of Michigan**, so he knows the score. The whole family enjoyed going to **Houston** to celebrate Shannon's grandmother's 80th birthday. She is still working 30 hours a week and very much looking forward to a church choir NYC trip next month.

**Hannah Norton**, former member and faithful member of the choir, says, "I'm so excited to announce my engagement to **Thor Blevins**! Thor and I met singing in the **Gainesville Civic Chorus** and have been dating for 4 1/2 years. He's a true Florida boy - born and raised in the Orlando suburbs - and works as a pharmacy technician at a local hospital. I'm still working as a librarian at the **University of Florida Health Science Center Library** (in fact, just got tenure this summer). We don't yet have a date set for the wedding, but we know it will be held in Gainesville. Our dog, **Roscoe**, is excited about it too!"

## Heart of Texas Association News

November

by Liz Nash

Two of our Association churches had major anniversary celebrations this month. Congratulations to Faith UCC in New Braunfels on their 50th and to United Christian on their 25th birthday celebrations.

Faith New Braunfels held the worship service on October 16th that was the culmination of many months of anniversary activities. The church has, since 2009, had a major commitment to extending an extravagant welcome as an Open and Affirming Church. Leading up to the October celebration, the church had former ministers preach, recognized past baptisms and confirmations, and celebrated the great mission work of the church and of its individual members. On the 16th, Rev. Dr. Don Longbottom, our Designated Conference Minister preached to an enthusiastic congregation. Following the service, we joined in their fellowship hall for a catered lunch together, capping off a full and festive day.

United Christian, Austin celebrated its distinctive history on Sunday, October 23rd, preceded by an all church barbecue on Saturday evening. United, as many of you know, was formed 25 years ago by the union of Pecan Springs Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Trinity UCC, both congregations located on the east side of I35, north of what was Mueller Airport. As in most church merger processes, there were many challenges overcome by people of faith and determination. Both congregations made the difficult choice to give up their buildings, and the new church built in a different area of town, at the time on the northern edge of Austin. The church also made its own way in decisions about the differing practices of the two denominations -- how and when to baptize as well as how to celebrate communion. The congregation has grown into a vibrant Open and Affirming church, diverse in many ways, with young families, a large youth and children's ministry, and people of all ages. At the service, charter members were recognized and celebrated, and

people from all eras of the church's life were called forward during the children's time to place paper flowers on a wide poster to form the beautiful garden that the church has become.

Both churches have many ordained and licensed ministers as part of the church. Faith has Ray Bizer, Pastor Emeritus, as a treasured member, several retired ministers (some who live at nearby Edenhill Communities, which has a longtime, historic association with the UCC starting with the Texas District of the Evangelical Church), and ministers serving currently in a variety of ways. United has both Disciples and UCC ministers who are currently serving in many capacities or are retired.

I give thanks to God for the blessing to so many that these churches embody.

Blessings in Christ,  
Liz Nash

Heart of Texas Association Minister

## Personals (continued)

by Pat Oakes



**10/16/16** Our church was well-represented at the October 16 Austin Interfaith Accountability Session at Mount Olive Baptist Church, where CCoA members, along with 200 other Austin Interfaith members secured commitments from Austin City Council candidates to support living wages, just community policing practices, and other measures to advance community equity and fairness.

**Janet Burns** is still getting settled in her new home in **Topeka, KS**. Her new address is **1903 SW Medford Avenue, Topeka, KS 66604**. She has the same phone number -- **512-922-5929**. She has bought some new furniture and loves her house and her neighborhood,. She finds it amazing how quiet and peaceful the town is compared to Austin. It is very, very different, and she is adjusting, but so far happy. (She really misses Whole Foods and Central Market though!) Her mom is doing better after a couple of rough weeks and is in very good spirits in spite of the back pain and hassles. Janet thinks she much comforted by her being here. For Janet's part, she thinks she got there at the right time. Janet is so glad she was there with her during this time and could drive her to the hospital, etc. Janet's sister came in for their mom's birthday and they gave her a small celebration. Janet says, "I do miss you all, and miss being at church. I have not visited any churches here yet, as there has been so much to do otherwise." She works at home online every day, and continues to work for IBM. She is so grateful for this job that allowed her to move across the country without having to find new employment. She got her voter's registration card in the mail, and her voting place is the **First Congregational Church** - the church where her parents and grandparents were members.



**9/22/16** CCoA congregation members at the Equal Justice Center's Peter Pan Mini-Golf fundraiser standing in front of the "Beacon of Justice" mini-golf hole which was sponsored by the CCoA at this year's event. Pictured above, l-r back--Mark Kultgen, Becky Nash, Reuel Nash, Bill Beardall; middle row--Amy Harris, Joy Penticuff, Nodie Murphy, Tony Rogers, Dennis Murphy; front row-- Roberto Hernandez, Jonathan Geer, Liz Nash

**Mel and Pat Oakes** enjoyed a visit with 4 friends from **France** in late October. In addition to seeing some of the usual sights, they enjoyed introducing their friends to fried green tomatoes, fried okra, and hushpuppies--along with catfish, of course.



10/16/16 Among those from our church attending the Austin Interfaith Accountability Session at Mt. Olive Baptist Church were (from the far end of the pew)-- Jaime Hadley. Doug Ingalsbe a friend of Andy and Faye's who just moved here from Nebraska, Andy and Faye Dierksen, Whit Bodman and Becky Nash

**Edith and David Scott** (a part of our church family in the mid '80s) reported from **Scotland** that they were having a lovely spell of early fall weather. The longer it lasts, the shorter the winter will feel (hopefully). They have been spellbound watching the Presidential race for the White House. Sometimes fact is stranger than fiction! They were headed across the pond at the end of October. They stopped in **Boston, New York, the Bahamas and Bermuda** before ending their cruise with a couple of days in **Miami**.

In **Ruth Koenig's** family, there are 7 people who have October-Nov. birthdays, so Ruth has had her recipes and her baking pans out. The communal October-November birthdays were **Travis, Doug, Barbara, John**, the twins (**Lottie and Thea**) soon to be 4), and **Great-Grandma Ruth**. She was excited that one of the October birthers, Ohio son Doug, flew in from **Lebanon, OH**. Doug is co-owner of a Beech Bonanza. **Grandson-in-law Travis** and the twins picked him up Saturday afternoon at Executive Airport and dropped him off at Ruth's. They had a family dinner at Ruth's that evening, Barbara and John (brother of Doug) hosted another dinner on Sunday evening, and then Doug took off early Tuesday morning. With the aid of technology, Ruth could watch his progress home, all the way home, interrupted with a gas stop in **Arkansas**, and then his landing at 3:30 at home. With the aid of a tail wind, he got there even quicker than usual. Since the county airport is right in back of their house, he really landed at home. You can imagine that this spoils him for when they fly commercial airlines, having to go through security lines, etc.

**Wilmer and Hulen Brown** spent a fruitful and interesting 2 months volunteering in various capacities at the **UCC Back Bay Mission in Mobile, AL**. <https://thebackbaymission.org/what-we-do/ministries/> Hulen notes that the mission is working on raising \$200,000 by the end of 2016 for the programs which the mission supports--a food pantry, help with housing and finding jobs--and there are only \$120,000 left to go! Church groups from all over the country come there to work on housing rehabilitation and other projects. Hulen enjoys giving tours of the facilities to local folks.



**Return Service Requested**

## December Visitor Deadline—November 23, 2015

### History Corner

by Pat and Mel Oakes

This is apropos, although history now looks at the arrival of the Pilgrims in a different light.

December 21, 1920, The Beloit Daily News, Beloit, Wisconsin

#### **The Pilgrims**

by Rev. A. O. Stevens, the second pastor of our church, who served from June 18, 1923—Jan 1925

Their dear English homeland they left,  
The land of their love and their pride;  
The land of the thatched-roof cottage,  
And rose-garden smiling beside;  
The land of the deep English grasses,  
And sweet-smelling violets blue;  
The land where their fathers were sleeping  
Under the shade of the yew.  
Over the pitiless seas they came,  
Sailing an uncharted way.  
And black was the wave, and black the sky,  
And cold the salt sea spray.  
And frail was their bark, and close its walls,  
Like the narrow house of death.  
And the storm came down with its fury unleashed,  
And chilled with its icy breath.  
Hither they came, and moored their bark,  
But 'twas not in a `haven of peace.  
They found not a land of flowers and fruit  
And birds and leafy trees;  
But a land of want and hunger and cold,  
And forests white with snow  
Where the panther crept and the savage stalked,  
And Winter and Fever and Famine walked,

And the graves on the lonely hill-side told  
Their tale of bitter woe.  
And here they stood, and yielded not  
To fever and famine and want;  
They had made the venture and pledged their all;  
Their spirits had answered the heavenly call;  
And nothing their hearts could daunt;  
When the sails, were set, and the anchor weighed,  
And homeward the Mayflower sped,  
Not a Pilgrim sire, nor a Pilgrim dame,  
Nor a Pilgrim lad, nor a Pilgrim maid  
Recalled the vows they had said.  
Pilgrims were they, and Pilgrims shall be,  
Ever in quest of truth,  
Ever sailing an uncharted sea  
In the courage and hope of youth;  
Ever traveling an untried way  
Which leads to an untrod shore;  
Ever hearing the voice of Him  
Whose Spirit has gone before;  
Strong in the sense that God is their guide,  
And truth their beacon light;  
Venturing boldly into the deep  
Of God and Truth and Right.

To learn more about Rev. A.O. Stevens, go to <http://congregationalchurchofaustin.org/about-us/history/ministers/>