

THE VISITOR

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

408 West Twenty-third Street, Austin, Texas 78705-5214

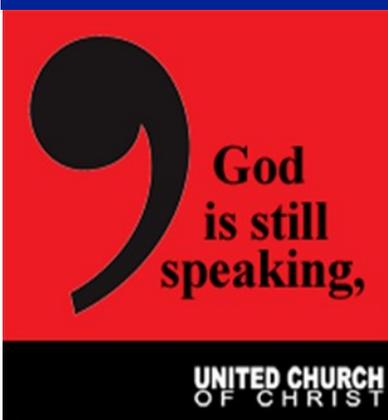
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Rev. Amelia Fulbright



“The Disconnect”

Several people have asked me about my vision for the church. It’s a beautiful, important, and complex question, and I don’t have a tidy answer for it just yet. These first few months, I have been focused on paying attention---listening, watching, noticing, asking questions. My understanding of vision is that it is something that the church must birth together, and I imagine myself as the midwife charged with watching over a healthy delivery. It is my role to provide knowledge, resources, and tools, and there may be moments when I need to step in, take charge, and keep us on track. But you are the ones creating a new life, and the closer we get to delivery, the more clearly we will see the shape and dimensions this new life is taking many of the young people I know. This puts us way ahead of the game when it comes to bridging the disconnect!

It is fair to say, though, that I have a vision for the wider Church, capital ‘C’. I have spent a great deal of my 14+ years of ordained ministry working with young people, many of whom have been deeply hurt or disillusioned by churches, yet still are spiritually seeking. I still believe the Church, at its best, has something to offer young people, and I also believe that these youth and younger adults have much to offer religious institutions. A big part of my calling is to carefully and slowly build a bridge between our waning institutions and the young people who are its future.

At the end of October, the Wall Street Journal published some recent research about the attitudes of young people toward religious institutions. It should be noted that people of diverse faiths were surveyed, not just Christians, and patterns emerged across faith traditions:

“Half of young people ages 13 to 25 surveyed said they don’t think that religious institutions care as much as they do about issues that matter deeply to them, according to a report released Monday by the Springtide Research Institute, a nonpartisan nonprofit. Those issues include racial justice, gender equity, immigration rights, income inequality and gun control. Springtide tracks the views of American teens and young adults. It has done research work in conjunction with the Princeton Theological Seminary and the Mennonite Church, among others.”

If you are able to get beyond the paywall, I encourage you to read the full article:

<https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/young-people-say-disconnect-keeps-them-from-church-11635163200>

The article got me to thinking about where our church stands in relationship to these findings, and I’d like to offer a few reflections here, as a way of opening up a conversation about the future:

1. Firstly, I believe CCA does care about the issues seen as critical by the young people in the article and by so many of the young people I know. This puts us way ahead of the game when it comes to bridging the disconnect!

2. Secondly, I think our growing edge is in communicating that we care. This is one reason that the development of a consistent and bold online presence is so important. It is why I’ve spent a lot of time in my

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first few months working with **Kyle** (our Director of Online Ministries) and others to move forward with our livestream setup and to begin establishing a stronger social media presence. All of these online platforms have their pitfalls, just like non-digital forms of communication! But they are a part of the world now. To not engage them is to choose not to engage the larger world, and with intention and integrity, I believe we can create quality, life-giving content.

3. Thirdly, when young people do attend and join our church, how do we fully integrate them into the life and leadership of our congregation? Many, many congregations struggle with how to do this well. I know many stories of young adults who have joined churches, gotten actively involved, and even been elected to serve on Boards. But when they've suggested a new way of doing things or even a new ministry idea, they have been met with either outright resistance or a kind of passive lack of support and enthusiasm. It usually ends with young people walking away entirely or simply pulling back, too discouraged to keep investing themselves in the same way. We know this has happened at our church, too. As part of our transitional discernment conversations in the new year, I hope we'll bravely wrestle with this phenomenon and ask ourselves how we might short-circuit this pattern here at CCA.

4. Finally, one thing we as members of the institutional Church can do to build a bridge to younger generations is to hold lightly our expectation that they should come to us and instead, challenge ourselves to go to them! We can join with young people who already are doing work around spirituality and activism outside the walls of traditional religious institutions. In my next newsletter article, I want to say more about this and tell you about my friend **Aaron** and an idea he and I are working on called The Big Activity. Aaron is a local musician and artist, a contemplative soul, and a deep theological thinker. He's in a band, TC Superstar, that played one of the stages at ACL Fest this year, and he's also creating spiritual community among his friends. I have known **Aaron** since he was an undergraduate at UT and I was his campus minister, and it's an honor that he still wants to hang out with me and dream about what the future of faith can be. More on that in my next article...

Until then, may the peace of Christ be with you. I'm glad to be on this journey with you, in this time and place.

Amelia

December Visitor Deadline November 22, 2021

Church Leadership

Deacons Chair	Jen Howicz
Outreach Team	open
Moderator	Joy Penticuff
Treasurer	Gail Christeson
Financial Secretary	Jaime Hadley
Christian Education Coordinators	open
Youth Sunday School	open
Clerk	Reuel Nash
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Webmaster	Mel Oakes
Member-At-Large	Bill Beardall

Heart of Texas Association News
November
by Nikki Stahl



Greetings! My name is Rev. **Nikki Stahl**. Starting on November 1st, I'm your new Heart of Texas Association Minister. Before I tell you more about me, let me say what an important pastor, mentor, and friend Rev. **Liz Nash** has been for me. Over the last few weeks, I've been able to hear many of you share how important that she has been to you. Again, many thanks to Rev. **Liz Nash!** **Liz**, thank you for your ministry and all the ways in which our lives have been blessed and enhanced by it. Now, go enjoy those grandbabies!!

There is a lot that I can share about me so I will just hit the highlights. I was born and raised in Austin. Grew up Southern Baptist. I have a bachelor degree in Finance from UT of Austin, a masters of Social Work and a masters of Divinity from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. I've held several "jobs" prior to seminary including Workers Compensation Underwriter, 3M Plant and Operational Accountant, and Business Analyst.

I served at United Christian Church of Austin from 2011 until earlier this year as Associate, Executive, and then Co-Pastor. I've worked with some amazing pastors at United including Rev. **Tim Tutt**, Rev. **Ken White**, Rev. **John Gage**, and Rev. **Anna Kreisle**. I have learned so much from each of them.

Over the years I have been active in the Association by participating on the Executive Committee, and Scholarship Committee and mentoring members in discernment. I have also served on the Camp Council at Slumber Falls.

The past few years my focus has been at the Conference level where I served on the Board of Directors for five years including the last two as President (term ended June 2021). I'm currently overseeing the newly formed Communities in Practice groups.

I've been married to my husband, **Ian**, for 15 years. We have three daughters: **Marian** (14), **Emmalee** (10), and **Cora** (8). We stay busy with church, school, piano, dance, and marching band (**Marian** plays vibraphone in the pit!). My mother, **Lee**, and her dog (Blue) live with us along with our three cats (Lola, Henri and Precious). In July we added a new puppy - BB Grace!

That's just a bit about me. I look forward to learning more about you and your congregations! If there is something going on in your congregation, please let me know! If possible, I would love to be there! *** I want to get to know you!

I can be reached at revnikkistahl@gmail.com and my cell number is 512-751-3557. I'm also on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/togetherwithyouonthejourney>.

The Heart of Texas Association is full of amazing churches, doing amazing things in their communities. I am honored to be a part of your work even if it is just in little ways.

With you on the Journey,
Rev. **Nikki Stahl**
Association Minister (elect)

***Until my youngest two can be fully vaccinated for COVID, I will not be able to attend inside gatherings where people are unmasked. I am available for outside gatherings, zoom calls, email, texts, or phone calls.

Personals
by Pat Oakes

Andy and Faye Dierksen say, "We have one "little" announcement this month! **Baby Dierksen #2** is due to join us in April 2022! A "bigger" announcement is that Deek had his first birthday on October 8, 2021. He celebrated with his mom, dad, aunt **Megan**, Grambu **Cameon** and Grandpa **Jim**."



9/15/21 Darling Deek Dierksen is going to be a big brother!!!



10/18/21 Happy Faye Dierksen



10/8/21 Deek Dierksen with his maternal grandmother, "Grambu" Cameon on his first birthday

Whit Bodman writes, "I grew up sailing around mid-coast Maine with my dad and, for a while, in my own boat. Through the years we sailed as far down east as Newfoundland, so it was wonderful to have another opportunity to return to familiar places. It was also wonderful to sail in September, when the anchorages are much less crowded and there is a bit less fog. This time we chartered a 41' Swan sloop, an easy boat to handle, though cramped in the cockpit. The crew consisted of my nephew from North Carolina, **Trevor**, who is strong, willing, and knowledgeable, **Liz** and **Reuel Nash** (the boat was chosen to accommodate **Reuel's** height), **Beth Gleason**, and **Mary** (a friend of **Beth's** from New Jersey who grew up in Maine)—and **Beth's** little dog Flower. **Beth** did not start out with us but joined us later in Stonington. Flower was staying with a friend, but Flower was mourning the death of her companion dog, Milagro, so **Beth** felt she had to go back and be with Flower. The solution, since we really wanted **Beth** to join us, and she really needed the rest, was to bring Flower along with us. Hence, Flower the Sailor Dog was born. **Beth** and Flower did sail all the rest of the trip back to Camden and then **Trevor** and I drove her to Stonington to pick up her car. Every cruise has its own character. On this cruise we had good cooks - dedicated cooks - so there was a lot of discussion of recipes and techniques and, of course, excellent eating. There was also a fair amount of conversation

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

about things spiritual and therapeutic. We set out from beautiful Camden, ME, on Tuesday the 13th of October and sailed south around the Isleboro chain of islands and up to Pulpit Harbor on East Penobscot Bay. The second day was more rigorous, with good winds, some fog, and a wee bit of rain. No problem. It was fun blowing the manual foghorn. We sailed into Bucksport, which I usually avoid because it is small and crowded, but in September it had plenty of room. **John Buck** managed the marina - great and mysterious stories there - and provided us both with lobster and with a steamer behind the building to cook them in. We had outdoor showers, which were a treat. A shower with a view! The next day was beautiful and sunny, a great time for Eggmoggin Reach down to Blue Hill Bay and a quiet anchorage in Mackerel Cove. From there we went back to Camden to drop off **Beth** so that she could go get Flower in Portland, then to Stonington on Deer Isle for the night. **Beth** was able to rejoin us a couple of days later for the final two days. We visited one of my favorite places, Lunt Harbor in Frenchboro, on Long Island. At the top of the dock there is a lobster shack which also, if you get the timing right, has fresh baked blueberry pie. Unfortunately, it closed on Labor Day, but we did get to walk around the village and visit the small church. Since the last time I was there it had installed the most amazing painting behind the pulpit, the communion of saints bowing to Jesus, with boats in the foreground. We went back to Stonington for the final evening. **Beth** rejoined us at that point. Here the dinghy ran out of gas on the way to the dock. A lobsterman came by and towed us in, gave us some free gas, and then provided us with our second round of lobster, straight off the boat. From Stonington we had our final sail back to Camden to close out the cruise. We discovered that we had been given the wrong dinghy and the "theft" had been reported to the police. We were exposed when we went into the dock to unload. The owner was very unhappy, but not with us, thankfully. From there we went our separate directions with no major injuries, having hit no rocks, and a few pounds heavier, no doubt. A fuller account is written in the log of the cruise, to which everybody contributed along the way. At some point perhaps we will produce a fuller account with illustrations." **Reuel** notes that he does

not consider himself a skilled sailor, mainly because it has been a long time. He and **Liz** took sailing lessons in the Redwood City, CA, Harbor and San Francisco Bay sometime in the 1990s. They had to take the lessons separately as the other one needed to be at home with the kids! Thanks for the great report, Whit! What a wonderful adventure they had!! Let's hear it for living vicariously!



9/14/21 Sailing over the bounding main--Reuel Nash in the foreground and Whit Bodman and Liz Nash at the helm of the Blue Moon along the coast of Maine



9/14/21 Reuel, Whit, Liz, and Beth Gleason's friend Mary off the coast of Maine

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

There's a new trio member to introduce to everyone. Her name is **Liz Lee** and she is originally from New York about an hour north of NYC. She is a wonderful cellist and all-around great person for us to have playing at Austin Congregational. She started cello when she was nine and before that she played piano—her mom is a piano player. She went to Juilliard Pre-college, Rice for her undergrad, San Francisco Conservatory of Music for her Masters, and UT Austin for doctorate~ and that was how she met **Amy**. During their time at UT together, she and **Amy** played in a quartet that was invited to a festival in Topeka, Kansas, called the Sunflower Music Festival. People can check out her YouTube channel www.youtube.com/cello **Liz** is a local performer and teacher and is assistant Professor of Cello at Texas Lutheran University. She's also been known to rock out with various bands on her electric cello!! She is so happy to be back playing for the church again. She had subbed many years ago and she says it is great to be part of the family again! We're really excited to have her join us. **Tony Rogers** is going to move on to some new projects, but we are sure we will be having him back from time to time as his schedule allows. He has stepped back from the trio position after beginning a big on-line cello choir project called the COVID Cello Project, as well as some other playing opportunities in the area.



10/21 Welcome to our new cellist in the trio—Liz Lee

Betty Bodman is back in town after another two-week stint in Whitefish, Montana, helping her daughter-in-law with 15-month-old twins **Otis** and **Arlo** while **Betty** and **Whit's** son **Noah** was mountain bike riding in Italy with friends. The two weeks in Whitefish had a bit of excitement as there was an exposure to COVID at the boys' daycare, but they all quarantined and all stayed well. After his sailing adventure, **Whit** came home and spent two weeks working at the election center at the University of Texas.

Our wonderful **Catherine (aka Cathy) Hubbs** celebrated her 99th birthday on October 7th with her daughter **Laura Hubbs-Tait** who was in town for a five-day visit from Stillwater, OK. **Catherine** so misses her visits from family who have been unable to visit often because of the pandemic. The momentous birth date got lost in the shuffle, but those who remember **Catherine** are encouraged to send her a birthday card even though the date is past. Being 99 is worth celebrating every day. You can send cards to **Catherine Hubbs** c/o **Haley Steinberg**, 4200 Jackson Ave., Austin, TX 78731.



10/7/21 Cathy Hubbs and her daughter Laura enjoyed some time outdoors during Laura's recent visit

Photos cont. on the next page

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes



10/7/21 Cathy Hubbs and her daughter Laura enjoyed some time outdoors during Laura's recent visit

that can be damaged with a heavy touch. She personally finds giving a massage very energizing and meaningful and feels accomplished when she is done.



10/20/21 Sarah graduating from A New Beginning School of Massage standing by the owner, Casie Arthur

Sarah D. graduated from A New Beginning School of Massage on Wednesday, Oct. 20th. This was a seven-month program preparing students for all kinds of massage – especially Swedish massage with some exposure in many other areas, including, geriatric, sports, prenatal, lymph draining, hot stones, suction cupping, reflexology, pregnancy, spa, foot massage, Reiki, Asian techniques, and more. She has been studying very hard and was really bogged down in the anatomy and physiology components. There were several weeks of having to study online and at home because of COVID. Nobody in her class got Covid and they didn't get it from any of their clients who were given intern massages. She will keep studying as the rest of her class is doing. Each of them will decide individually when they are going to take their national exams. She has always had a strong Christian belief in laying on of hands for healing. She has been influenced by the vibrational and energy medicines that are being practiced as complementary and alternatives to traditional medicine. The power of touch can be very healing. To be an excellent massage therapist means one has effective training that includes knowing where to touch, the many different ways to touch, and areas that are considered endangered because of the veins go through that area

Keep **Beth Gleason** in your prayers. She was to have breast cancer surgery in Boston at Beth Israel/Deaconess Hospital on Monday October 25th, but there was a delay due to paperwork not arriving in a timely manner from San Antonio. The surgeons plan to remove her lymph nodes, looking for the possibility of cancer spread. She is, of course, hoping that the surgery takes place sooner than later. The outcome will determine further treatment. **Beth** is very optimistic as she has a great team of young, gifted oncologists where she is in Maine. She is happy with her decision to return to Maine for that reason alone, plus connecting with old friends has been a blessing. She, along with much of New England, has been enjoying watching the Red Sox in their quest to play representing the American League in the World Series which sadly ended on Oct. 22nd.

Ann Locasio had a great time participating in the annual O. Henry pun-off on Saturday, Oct. 23rd. **Ann** had been longing to participate and this year she earned the opportunity to participate with her meaty entry! She was most grateful for the filming help from

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

from **René Slataper**. This was the second year of the pun-off taking place virtually, but it did give lots of folks the opportunity to enjoy the fun. The voting ended on Oct. 30th, too late for our readers to vote, but you might enjoy watching the link with the entrants sharing their punniest plays on words.
<https://www.punoff2021.com/the-contest> .



10/23/21 Ann Locasio delivering meaty pun after meaty pun for the annual O. Henry pun-off

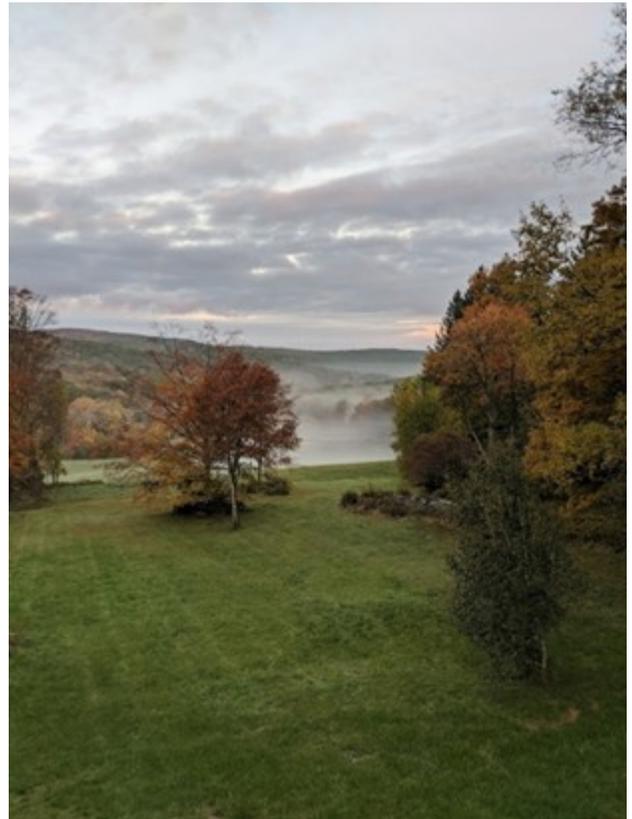
The extended **Nash** family plus close family friends had a wonderful Thanksgiving (Canadian Thanksgiving date) at their family home in the Berkshires. The house is in Mount Washington, MA.
<https://goo.gl/maps/DmZtQLgoar5Rigfb7>
The photos of the trees reflecting in the lake are at Lee Pond, also near there. **Reuel** thinks there were a total of 12 people there over the weekend including some friends who are really like family. **Liz, Becky, Ellie, Louis, Vivi, and Reuel** arrived on 10/7 and left on 10/13. Others came and went during that time as they could. **Annie, Sooner, Sooner's mom Clemma Dawsen, Omar Ghaznavi, Colie (Nicole)** and her mom **Melanie Harbert**.



10/9/21 Liz and Reuel Nash picking apples in the Berkshires with granddaughter Vivi



10/10/21 The Nash family gathering for Thanksgiving in the Berkshires--back row--Annie Nash, Sooner Dawsen, Nicole Harbert, Liz Nash, Melanie Harbert, Ellie Nash, seated--Becky Nash, wiggly Vivi with her dad Louis Rodgers, Reuel pointing at his future grandchild



10/21 Beautiful fall view in the Berkshires where the Nashes shared a family reunion Thanksgiving

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

Recently widowed earlier this summer, **Betty Phillips** says, “We’re all doing better, getting strength back and the gray fog is lifting. **Katy** and I are going road tripping next week, visiting **Bill’s** sister **Ann** in NC and then an old friend of **Katy’s** from Gullett Elementary. Her sister has a big house on Virginia Beach, and it’s usually rented all year, but one week in October every year **Katy’s** friend can use the house and invite guests. Lucky us! If we get any pix of whales or dolphins, we’ll send them. We’re planning to sleep, walk and eat!”

Eunice Paul celebrated her 100th birthday in great style at her home in Leatherhead, Surrey, U.K. on September 28th. On hand to lead the festivities was daughter **Lydia Tapley** who lives about ten miles away. There were several parties for neighbors and friends over a few days and Lydia created an embroidered family tree which is framed and now hanging where **Eunice** can enjoy it. **Eunice** was delighted to receive birthday greetings from Austin friends like **David Cleaver Bartholomew** (who now lives in Providence, RI), **Stephen Russell**, **Mel** and **Pat Oakes**, and others. **Eunice** and her late husband Rev. Dr. **Robert Paul** (who was on the faculty of the Austin Presbyterian Seminary from 1977-87) were very involved members of the church during that time. When asked if the queen had come by for tea, she responded that she had not but was delighted to receive birthday greetings from Queen **Elizabeth II**. She noted that she is planning to send a birthday card to the queen on her next birthday (96). **Eunice** sends her greetings to all who remember her.



9/28/21 Eunice Paul celebrated her 100th birthday at her home in Leatherhead, England--Queen Elizabeth II sent her a signed card



9/28/21 Eunice Paul celebrated her 100th birthday at her home in Leatherhead, England--Queen Elizabeth II sent her a signed card



9/28/21 Eunice Paul celebrated her 100th birthday at her home in Leatherhead, England--here with her daughter Lydia Tapley and each with a glass of champagne

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

Mel and **Pat Oakes** had a wonderful two weeks in San Francisco in early October. Their good friends who live a block from Golden Gate Park decided that it was safe to travel again and asked **Pat** and **Mel** if they would like to stay in their home while they were gone. The answer was yes!! They have been able to do that (with the exception of last summer) three times which is a real treat. They were able to spend quite a bit of time with daughter **Mardie** and nine-year-old grandson **Durham**. The four of them made a quick trip to close-by Palo Alto, CA, and were able to visit with grandson **Ethan Buck**, a freshman at Stanford for several hours. **Mel** particularly enjoyed their visit to the UC Berkeley campus where he has sent many graduate students over the years. The Blue Angels were in town for Fleet Week which made for some excitement when they were practicing in the neighborhood. **Pat's** brother **Robert** came up from LA for two nights and two days and **Pat's** second cousin and her husband came for a 1/2-day visit from Petaluma. What they enjoyed the most (besides the fabulous weather and seeing family) was walking in Golden Gate Park — excellent exercise and there are always nearby benches to rest in case one gets tired.



10/7/21 Pat's brother Robert Winter, Pat, and Mel enjoying a walk at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park



10/11/21 Mardie, Mel, Durham, and Pat at the Flower Conservatory in Golden Gate Park at the dahlia garden



10/2/21 Mel and Pat, Mardie with nephew Ethan Buck and son Durham outside Ethan's dorm—Burbank—on the Stanford campus

Linda Bulkeley Morine (active in the church in the late 1980s) reports from the Bay Area, "I am busy with work, frequent visits to Phoenix to see my Mom (she is in her mid-80s with no family nearby), coordinating weekly speakers for my local Rotary club. Never thought I'd ever belong to Rotary, but it has changed a lot since my Dad's days. Since my work is all financial administration, my public policy interests are realized in Rotary (just finished a speaker series on housing), a local friends of creek group and book club. Husband **Leland** and I continue to attend a Presbyterian church (no UCC in town). Admittedly, I find church frustrating these days. We are meeting live, but LOTS of restrictions - no congregational singing, no speaking (e.g., no Lord's Prayer, no confession, etc.). I will be really glad when the pandemic is done."

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



9/14/21 Fabulous (and decorated) cooks in the galley of the Blue Moon



9/17/21 The Blue Moon, a 41-foot Swan sloop out of Camden, ME, Reuel Nash, and Whit Bodman on deck



9/15/21 Lobster time on board the Blue Moon



9/16/21 Happy sailor, Reuel Nash on the coast of Maine

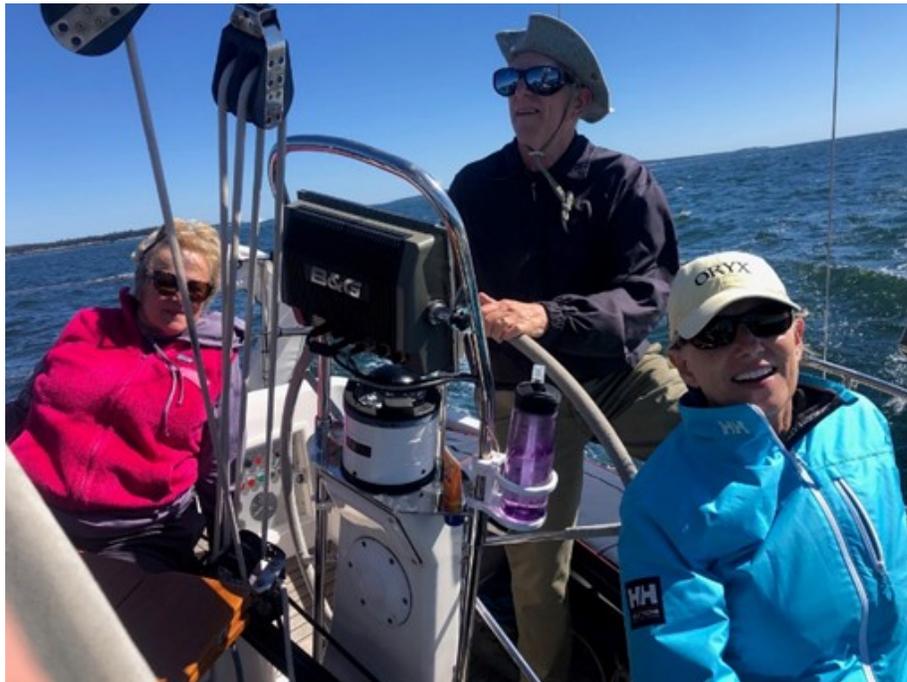


9/17/21 Reuel Nash with Beth Gleason's dog Flower, the Sailor Dog!!!

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



9/18/21 Liz Nash looking at the beautiful altar in the community church in Lunt Harbor



10/19/21 Beth Gleason and her friend Mary with Captain Bodman at the helm off the coast of Maine