

January 2022

# THE VISITOR

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

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**Rev. Amelia Fulbright**



## “What is a Reproductive Freedom Congregation?”

**Rev. Amelia Fulbright**

**W**e have begun our conversations about becoming a Reproductive Freedom Congregation (RFC), so I wanted to take some space here to lift up key aspects of what we are considering. If we choose to take this step as a congregation, it is so important to think of it as a beginning, a first step, in a long-term endeavor.

From the Just Texas website:

“Too often, congregations – even progressive faith communities – perpetuate a conspiracy of silence around reproductive health issues, especially abortion. This silence can make [pregnant people] reluctant to share their experiences or reach out for support, for fear of being **shamed, judged, or stigmatized**.”

The *Reproductive Freedom Congregation* initiative is a first step in bringing these issues out of the shadows.

*Reproductive Freedom Congregations* publicly affirm three principles:

- We **trust** and **respect** women.
- We promise that people who attend our congregation will be **free from stigma, shame, or judgment** for their reproductive decisions, including abortion.
- We believe access to comprehensive and affordable reproductive health services is a **moral and social good.**”

The goal of developing a congregational designation around reproductive freedom, similar to the open and affirming designation for LGBTQ+ folks, is to build a network of churches and a movement that is dedicated to changing the culture around these issues over the long haul. It is to help churches become safer, braver spaces for supporting people through all kinds of reproductive challenges and decision-making, including miscarriage, infertility, adoption, childbirth and childrearing, the choice not to have children, and yes—abortion.

What we are *not* agreeing to:

- We are not saying that we all must agree on when personhood or a human life begins.
- We are not saying that we all must hold precisely the same beliefs about when we would or would not choose an abortion.
- We are not saying that we all must agree on all aspects of human sexuality and procreation.

We ARE saying that this would be a space where those who have had abortions, statistically 1 in 4 of us, can be free to be open about their experiences. We are saying that this would be a space where those who are struggling with miscarriage or infertility do not have to suffer in silence. We are saying that we want our church to be a place where parents can be supported and nurtured in raising their children.

If we choose this path, the next step will be to consider ways to put belief into action. Some ways of doing that might include:

- \* Providing meals or other acts of care for clinic workers facing the effects of a harsh anti-abortion climate in Texas.
- \* Studying a curriculum on theological understandings of personhood and abortion.
- \* Starting a support group for people facing infertility.
- \* Becoming more involved in policy and advocacy for just laws.

After hearing from quite a few of you on this topic, there seems to be a growing consensus that our congregation would like to become part of this growing movement for reproductive freedom, for long-term culture change over contentious culture wars. We will have one more chance for informal conversation on this before our congregational meeting at the end of January. If you have unanswered questions or concerns or would like to express your perspective, please join us on Zoom after Joys & Concerns this Sunday, January 16. These are complex matters and most of us have had limited opportunities to think through them in community, especially not in church, so I encourage you to bring anything that is weighing on you.

In the meantime, if you'd like to learn more about the rich history of people of faith advocating for reproductive freedom, check out the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice: <https://rcrc.org>, an organization that dates back to before **Roe vs Wade**. Our new RFC movement is indebted to the work begun by brave and compassionate leaders over fifty years ago.

In Christ,

**Pastor Amelia**

## February Visitor Deadline January 21, 2022

### 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**  
**January**  
**by Nikki Stahl**

**Happy New Year (early)!**

I pray that your Advent and Christmas Time was/is meaningful for you and your congregations. There were/are so many beautiful activities happening across the Heart of Texas Association in your local congregations and settings. It was/is beautiful to behold each setting celebrating the incarnation of the divine in sometimes unique, sometimes familiar ways.

As the new year begins, I've been thinking a lot about the role of an Association Minister. According to the job description one of the main focuses is to support local congregations via lay leaders, local clergy, and local clergy's families. In an effort to live into these expectations, I'm looking for ways to connect one-on-one and in groups in addition to visiting your local congregations. Additionally, is the call to foster connections between the 20 wonderful churches of the Heart of Texas Association and create ties to the South Central Conference and beyond. Following are some efforts to live into these efforts:

**Clergy**

- ***First Tuesday of every month from 9:30 am - 11:30 am on zoom (for now).*** We can adjust time and place as we continue to move out of COVID. Part of this time will be fellowship and sharing, and the rest of the time we will creatively engage in the Marks of Ministry as we all strive to be healthy, well-rounded, growing clergy, regardless of our settings. Begins January 4th.
- Added bonus: the weekly Conference Cafe (Wednesday from 9:30 - 10:30) has been a wonderful way to connect with clergy all over the South Central Conference. Although not strictly Heart of Texas Association, a good number of HOTA clergy are regularly attending. We have a lot of fun wondering and stretching our theological understanding on such topics as what is a soul?, what does incarnation really mean?, and so on.

**Lay Leaders**

- ***First Wednesday of every month from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm on zoom.*** We will gather for a time of fellowship, sharing and dip our toes into educational pieces important for lay leaders. Begins January 5th. I could use your help in updating contacts (name & email) for your 2022 Lay Leaders. [Click here for form](#) or email me at [revnikkistahl@gmail.com](mailto:revnikkistahl@gmail.com).

These are both come and go so feel free to attend as you are able, for as long as you are able, even if it is to just pop on and say hello! Separate invites will be sent out to each group.

**Annual Meeting Planning**

There is still time for both lay and clergy to jump in and help with 2022 Annual Meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 6th at 12 pm. [Email me](#) for the zoom invite.

**Invite me to Worship with You**

So far I've been able to visit Bethany (San Antonio), Open Cathedral (Leander), Hope United (Georgetown), Trinity Church of Austin, Friends Congregational (College Station), Faith UCC (Bryan) and Faith UCC (New Braunfels). I have planned visits for St. John's UCC (Burton), Touchstone UCC (Boerne), St. Peter's UCC (Coupland), Redeemer UCC (Zuehl), and St. Paul's UCC (Corpus Christi). If you aren't on this list, let's plan a date!

**Heart of Texas Association News, cont.**  
**January**  
**by Nikki Stahl**

**Schedule a One-on-One**

I'm available for safe in-person visits, zoom or a good-ole fashioned phone call.

**FB and Instagram**

Information and cross-posting of your events and information happening here! Take a moment every once in a while to see what others in the Association are doing and/or share your good news!

Heart of Texas Association FB Page <https://www.facebook.com/HOTA.UCC>

Heart of Texas Association Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/heartoftexasassociation/>

Rev Nikki Stahl, Association Minister FB Page <https://www.facebook.com/togetherwithyouonthejourney/>

Rev. Nikki Stahl, Association Minister Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/rev.nikkistahl/>

I pray that some or all of these ways help you feel a little less out there on your own and connected to the wider church. If topics or needs arise, remember I'm here to be with you on the journey.

Peace and Light,  
**Nikki**

## Personals by Pat Oakes

**O**ur church family lost a long-time, beloved member on December 19th. **Chester Rosson** died in his sleep from cancer. He never was able to start the chemo treatments here in Austin after a recurrence from the cancer he was treated for about three years ago. **Barbara Burnham** and their son **Robin** along with his wife **Julia Ross** and granddaughters **Rebecca** and **Samantha** are grateful for the many hours they were able to spend with **Chester** in his last days. **Chester** moved to his family's farm in Crockett, TX, in 2006, but he was back and forth frequently to visit family—always singing in the choir when he was in town. Do take the time to look at a beautiful tribute the Texas Monthly staff posted at <https://www.texasmonthly.com/being-texan/chester-rosson-remembrances/> "Ode to a Fact Checker." Below the story are many staff reminiscences about their time with **Chester** at the magazine. They capture his essence. He will be sorely missed.

**Jeffrey**, daughter-in-law **Rachelle**, and adorable granddaughter **Josette**. **Conrad Deisler** and daughter **Olivia** were also with us. There was no party in the fellowship hall as has been the custom over the past six years, but almost seven year old **Vivienne Zercher**, daughter of **Amelia** and **Jonathan**, was busy handing out wrapped Christmas cookies to one and all. We all missed **Jaime Hadley** who usually takes care of the decorations and lighting the candles, but he was in California on business for only the second time since the pandemic began. Many thanks to the Deacons who filled in for **Jaime**.



12/19/21 Krystal Towery McMahon and her dad Ches Towery at the candlelight carol service



12/19/21 4 generations--Kathy Roberts, her daughter Lynne Lemley, her great-granddaughter Josette Lemley, and her granddaughter-in-law Rachelle and grandson Jeffrey Lemley at the candlelight carol service



2/11/18 A church and family celebration of Barbara Burnham's 70th--l-r Chester Rosson, Julia Ross holding almost 2 year old Rebecca, Samantha, 6, Barbara, and son Robin Rosson

The candlelight carol service at the church on Sunday evening, December 19th, was beautiful as always—despite everyone wearing masks and a smaller group than usual. It was also available online for those who could not come. It was a joy to see **Ches Towery** (son of our pastor **John Towery** who served from 1959-1989, and **Ches's** daughter **Krystal Towery McMahon**) and to have **Lynne Lemley** in attendance with her mom **Kathy Roberts**, son

Personals (cont)  
by Pat Oakes



12/19/221 Jen Howicz reading part of the liturgy at the church carol and candlelight service

**Faye, Andy, and Deek Dierksen** had a wonderful early Christmas celebration with **Faye's** side of the family. Her older brother **Jack** and his partner **Peggy** announced that they will be having a baby just two months after their baby's due date. They are due on June 24, 2022. They all stayed at an Airbnb at Hudson Bend so that **Faye** could continue to be on bed rest while everyone was there. Before her dad left for Florida, they were able to go to the Austin Trail of Lights. Her mom **Cameon Wefso** is staying through the new year and maybe longer depending on her next appointment. **Faye** is so grateful for the godsend her mom has been. **Deek** is also delighted that "Grambu" is around. Keep **Faye** and family in your prayers. Their next goal is to make it to 34 weeks—9 weeks away at this writing.



12/12/21 I-r--Andy, Faye, Jim and Cameon Wefso, Deek, Jack, Peggy, Charles & Kristen. Aunt Kristen brought the tree crown for Deek!

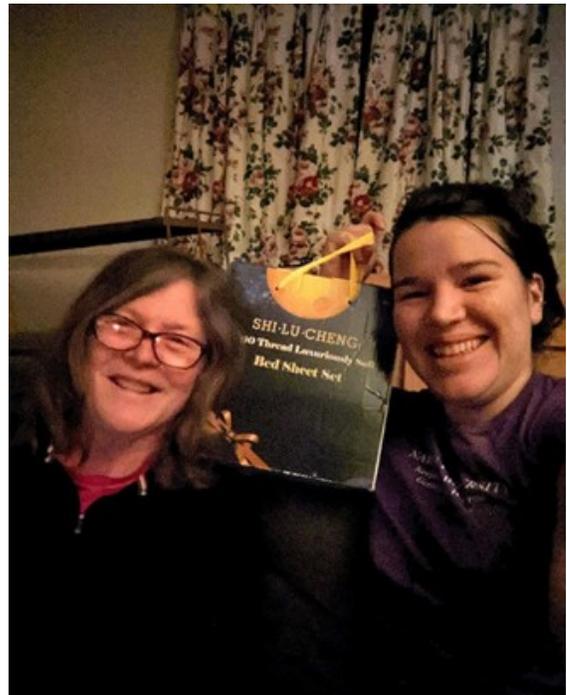
**Liz Nash** is supposed to be retired, but she certainly is busy. She reports, " I drove a U Haul truck full of furniture and boxes — **Annie's** things stored here in Austin -- up to the Manchester, Vermont, area, starting the Monday after Thanksgiving. **Annie** bought a house in a little town called Pawlet, where she and her fiancé, **Sooner**, already have good friends. She came down over Thanksgiving to visit and pack up, and I volunteered to drive so she would not have to take time off of work. Since it would be a trip without pets (which limit where you can stop), I planned to combine the trip with a pilgrimage I have been wanting to make to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (which is the lynching memorial) in Montgomery, Alabama, along with the associated Legacy Museum. The Montgomery sites are the projects of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) and are the fruit of a great deal of work spearheaded by EJI founder **Bryan Stevenson**, author of *Just Mercy* and subject of the film by the same name. On the night between these visits, I stayed at an older hotel in downtown Selma, right by the Edmund Pettis bridge, and drove most of the route of the Selma to Montgomery march. The view from the bridge is lovely, in poignant contrast to what happened there. I spent a whole day at each museum and will be processing the experiences for a long time. I won't comment much about my time there as these places are really sacred, but I encourage people to ask me about them if anyone wants to know more. I will, however, share some observations. The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum is, of course, focused on the struggle in Mississippi, and is half of the Two Mississippi Museums complex, with the other half being the Museum of Mississippi History. It was a fairly quiet day when I went, but I will say that it appeared to me that the Civil Rights Museum had more visitors. I admire Mississippi for doing what Texas has not done -- namely, building a museum that tells its horrific history honestly and in a great deal of depth. The Legacy Museum in Montgomery is breathtaking in the scope of what it addresses. starting from the beginning of the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans and extending into the current legacy of mass incarceration. It stands among the most deeply moving, involving, and illuminating places I have been in

Personals (cont)  
by Pat Oakes

my life. Although I had planned to visit the Peace and Justice Memorial first, I ended up going there at the end of the day. I was glad I did it that way, as it was a place to walk outside and simply look, letting me reflect at the end of an intense day. I will share two other things about the visits. There were groups of high school teenagers visiting each museum, clearly on school field trips. I was grateful to see these groups since a tour of either of these places brings students face to face with the history so many are still trying to keep out of our schools. Also, I rode a shuttle between the Peace and Justice Memorial (where I parked the big truck) and the Legacy Museum. The shuttle driver talked to me (I was the only one on the bus) about the places we passed and their history as we went as just something he wanted to do. One thing he pointed out was the big public fountain very close to the Legacy Museum in downtown Montgomery. It was the site of the largest slave auctions in the US. It also has a number of historical markers around it that commemorate things unrelated to its awful past, with only one marker -- and that one not right at the fountain -- discussing its history as the slave auction site. Two more days and I made it to Pawlet. I had a great visit with **Annie, Sooner**, and **Sooner's** mom, as well as meeting **Annie** and **Sooner's** very loving chocolate lab puppy, **Lola**, and hanging out with their cat, **Taka**, who actually kind of warmed up to me in her cat personality way. The house, built in the early 1900s, is by the woods on a lovely lot. **Annie** and **Sooner** are starting to dig in on the work (which is plenty) that the house needs. It will be an adventure for them, and it was fun to be in on that at the start. When I got back, **Reuel** and I took the second of two weekend-long sets of sailing lessons, following up on our great sailing trip to **Maine** with **Whit Bodman** and friends. Sailing on Lake Travis is certainly much different than sailing on Penobscot Bay in Maine! We have learned plenty and hope to do more sailing when I return from a month in Montreal (**Reuel's** back after two weeks). We will be there for Christmas with all of our family awaiting the arrival of **Ellie's** and **Louis'** second child. He is due on Christmas, but of course he will come when he decides to make his appearance."



12/2/21 Liz Nash in the moving truck she drove to Vermont with Annie's "stuff" for her recently purchased house



12/4/21 Liz and daughter Annie in Pawlet, VT in Annie's recently purchased house—Annie holding a housewarming present

**Personals (cont)**  
**by Pat Oakes**

Which is exactly what he did, in fact—on the 5th day of Christmas. **Ellie** and **Louis** and big sister **Vivi** were delighted to welcome **James Étienne David Nash Rodgers** who made his grand entrance on December 29th at 9:52pm; 8 lbs, 10 oz., 21.85 inches. **Ellie's** sister **Annie** was in Montreal with her folks for the event, but sadly, **Becky** did not make it as planned. She found out she had been in close contact with someone with Covid and canceled her trip for the 24th on the 23rd. She did not want to risk bringing an infection with her.



12/30/21 Proud parents Louis Rodgers and Ellie Nash with son James

Both **Bill Campbell** and **Victoria Li** have been traveling a great deal. **Bill** went to Minneapolis when **Victoria** went to Charleston and then they both went to Palo Alto, CA, to see **Victoria's** parents and family for Thanksgiving. After that, **Victoria** went to Hartford, CT, by herself to visit daughter **Kimberly Hsu** (an urgent care physician) and her husband **Sid Gurung** who is doing a one year fellowship in Interventional Cardiology at the University of CT. They had 5 days over Christmas in Charleston since **Lillian**, a second year general surgery resident, would have been all by herself and really needed a break. **Lillian** had to work 30 hours on Christmas Day, but they had a nice Zoom celebration Christmas Eve when she had a two hour window between work and going to bed. **Victoria** is planning more visits to Charleston more often to provide support. Her oldest daughter **Jocelyn Tau** has quit her law partner job to serve as the District Director (local chief of staff) for Congressman **Lloyd Doggett**. **Victoria** and **Bill** were very lucky in their travels Everything was all on schedule, not crowded, peaceful. **Bill** just came home from Minneapolis. He did shave off his beautiful beard so the mask could seal tightly.



12/31/12 Newborn James Rodgers with his proud big sister Vivi



11/21 Victoria Li with her grandchildren who live nearby--Lucas and his baby sister, born almost on the 4th of July, -- children of her daughter Jocelyn and Andy Tau

## Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

A long-delayed christening took place on Sunday, December 19th, the 4th Sunday of Advent. **Oliver Lytle**, son of **Zac** and **Heather Lytle**, was scheduled to be christened on Sunday, March 15, 2020, but then the pandemic intervened. Our last Sunday in the church at that point was March 8, 2020 just before the scheduled event. The family (**Heather's** parents live in San Antonio) finally was able to gather to celebrate the occasion. **Heather** and **Zac** are long-time friends of the church who had their first child **Roger** christened at the church in early 2014, but sadly, he died later that year. Their daughter **Abigail** was christened in August of 2015 before they went to Malawi where **Heather**, an ob-gyn, worked in a clinic there. Almost two years later, on our 3rd Sunday back for in-person services, **Oliver**, now three, finally got his turn. In addition to the joy of the baptism, there was the joy of having more than 35 folks in attendance that Sunday. The **Lytles** are currently living in Hood River, Oregon. **Zac** is taking care of the children and is enjoying the beautiful surroundings of the area while **Heather** continues working at a maternity clinic there. **Zac** reports that they got back home to Oregon just in time for a huge snowstorm and that they are enjoying some snow days.



12/19/21 Friends and family of Heather and Zac Lytle (including Heather's parents Valeria and Bill Sponsel and her brother Alistair) gathered with 6-year-old Abi and her 3-year-old brother Oliver for his long-delayed baptism.

**Warinda Harris**, CCA member, and a Central Texas Interfaith (CTI) leader represented

as well at the Dec. 14th on-line meeting. At least a dozen of us were on-line (along with dozens of others from other area churches) as we listened to her and other CTI leaders make their presentations on the accomplishments of CTI regarding the group's work to insist that funds are being allocated to help with homelessness and the work to provide housing for those in need. Also, in attendance and answering questions were Austin Mayor **Steve Adler** and County Judge **Andy Brown** (son of **Don** and **Sharon Brown**).



12/14/21 Warinda Harris speaking at the Central Texas Interfaith meeting on homelessness



12/14/21 County Judge Andy Brown speaking at the Central Texas Interfaith meeting on the issue of homelessness

It was a delight to see **Ruth Koenig** at church on the 2nd Sunday of Advent. Her son **John Koenig** (who lives in town) brought her. **Ruth** recently moved from Brookdale West Lake to Belmont Village on Bee Caves Rd. to an assisted living apartment. She is settling in very nicely and is meeting new folks and getting involved in activities every day.

Personals (cont)  
by Pat Oakes



12/5/21 93-year-old Ruth Koenig at church on the 2nd Sunday of Advent with Pat Oakes and Sara Ross



12/26/21 Jonathan Geer hurt his back this morning and both Amy and Liz were on vacation--so Pastor Amelia filled in on the piano!

**Don Miles** is excited that his 2nd edition of his book CINCO DE MAYO: WHAT IS EVERYBODY CELEBRATING? is out and available in stores and on Amazon at: [https://www.amazon.com/Cinco-Mayo-What-Everybody-Celebrating/dp/1792371934/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=1ZL4V1CKCXMJQ&keywords=cinco+de+mayer+what+is+everybody+celebrating%3F&qid=1641335930&s=books&prefix=cinco+de+mayer+what+is+everybody+celebrating+%2Cstripbooks%2C72&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Cinco-Mayo-What-Everybody-Celebrating/dp/1792371934/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1ZL4V1CKCXMJQ&keywords=cinco+de+mayer+what+is+everybody+celebrating%3F&qid=1641335930&s=books&prefix=cinco+de+mayer+what+is+everybody+celebrating+%2Cstripbooks%2C72&sr=1-1). The new edition features many color pictures, maps, and interesting history. Over a period of 50 years, **Don** and his late wife **Minerva** traveled extensively throughout Mexico, creating a treasure trove of information to bring this holiday into clear focus.

We managed to have 5 Sunday services in the sanctuary before the newly dominant omicron variant of Covid made it obvious that we should err on the side of caution, going back to virtual, on-line services. The Deacons will reevaluate in mid to late January to see when it is prudent to go back. It was so wonderful to see folks while we were actually able to be together in person. On the Sunday after Christmas, **Amelia** was expecting to preach and lead the service, but **Jonathan Geer**, our pianist, called to say he had hurt his back and would not be able to come. Furthermore, violinist **Amy Harris** and cellist **Liz Lee** were on vacation. What to do? Intrepid, multi-talented Pastor **Amelia** stepped up and did a fine job on the hymns while Whit led the singing.

**Debby Kohrt** and her daughter **Kristin**, son-in-law **Jason**, and two grandchildren, **Caleb** and **Zooley Parkhill**, have made a tradition each Christmas season of going to see the Zach Theater production of "A Christmas Carol." In spite of Covid this year, they went masked and had a wonderful time!



12/16/21 Happy grandmother Debby Kohrt (far right) with the Parkhill family (Caleb, Jason, Kristen, and Zooley) at the Zach Theater for their annual trip to see the performance of "A Christmas Carol"

## Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

**Stephen Russell** and **Scott Neeley** made the most of their time in Europe in November. They had a great long weekend in Prague with **Stephen's** sister **Amy** and her daughter **Emma Finch** who has been enjoying a junior year abroad studying in Prague. Folks at the church will remember **Salvatore Ioverno** when he attended for a while several years ago. **Salvatore** is currently at the University of Ghent in Belgium and came to Paris for a visit while they were there. He will move to Roma Tre University Rome, Italy, this spring to begin a faculty position.



11/21/21 Stephen Russell, Scott Neeley, Amy Russell, and Emma Finch (her daughter, junior at Univ. Denver, studying for a semester in Prague)



11/27/21 Salvatore Ioverno with Stephen Russell and Scott Neeley in Paris

**Mel** and **Pat Oakes** had a lovely six day visit from daughter Sarah and her husband **Joe Pierce** from Christmas Day until New Year's Eve afternoon. They chose low volume travel days, and all flights went well. As soon as they arrived, **Mel** drove them home with masks on and car windows open—and upon arrival at the house, **Pat** and **Mel** immediately took a rapid Covid test each—there were none available in Austin—and were delighted 15 (very long) minutes later to find that they were negative!! **Sarah** and **Joe** had tested prior to their departure and brought tests for **Pat** and **Mel** since there were none available in Austin. The four of them delighted **Pat** by completing a home project of re-covering the dining room chairs—so wonderful to have staff! They had all intended to take an overnight trip to Fredericksburg via Blanco, visiting friends on the way. Not surprisingly, **Sarah** learned that the Blanco folks had the flu and the Fredericksburg folks had COVID, so it was time to regroup. **Sarah** and **Joe** celebrated their 11th wedding anniversary by enjoying an overnight in Clarksville in a charming Airbnb and **Pat** and **Mel** enjoyed an 80th birthday party of a tennis buddy's of Mel's—outdoors and well-spaced.

**Frances Holliday Alford** reports she had a wonderful reunion with a former student of hers. "A reunion to top them all. In 2020, **Rex** brought **Sung Suk** to the United States on a fiancée visa, and they married within the required 90 days. They met on a chat line for blind Korean adults. After seven years of courtship, **Rex** convinced her to come to Washington, D.C., where he works for the IRS. **Sung Suk** told **Rex** she only wanted to meet one person in the US, and that was ME! During my Peace Corps assignment, (1978-1980), I was **Sung Suk's** teacher at the Cheongju School for the Blind in Cheongju, South Korea. I met her when she was 13. She is now 56. A lifetime ago--I had thought so much of her at the time, that I gave her my sister **Sallie's** name. (**Sallie Holliday**) In turn, I gave **Sallie Holliday**, **Sung Suk's** name as her honorary Korean name. **Rex** encouraged **Sung Suk** to look for me, so she called the school in Korea and asked if they knew how to find me. They directed her to **Kim, Dong Jin** who is the beloved father of my god daughters, , **Inyoung Kim** and her sister **Inah Kim**

**Personals (cont)**  
**by Pat Oakes**

**김인아**. **Dong Jin** gave her my cell phone number and we were able to reconnect last January. **김인아** So, tonight, more than forty years after first meeting, and a half a world away, **Mark** and I spent several hours in Washington, D.C., with this precious couple. We had dinner at McCormick and Schmick, exchanged gifts and told stories. **Sung Suk** says she will double her efforts to learn English. **Rex** has been in the states since he was 15 and graduated from UCLA so he is very fluent. Each of them had a little vision as young children which they say makes a big difference in how they now are able to envision the world. They once knew color, shape, and perspective. Now they work in a different perspective. They found each other. They found me. I am so happy that this day happened.” We look forward to **Frances** and **Mark** being back in Austin soon



12/13/21 Rex and his wife Sung Suk with Frances Holliday Alford at a wonderful reunion in Washington, D.C.

## History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes

The men's book club started in 1992 and consisted of men from the Congregational Church of Austin, United Church of Christ at 408 23rd Street, near the University of Texas. Meetings, held at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of each month, were hosted by members of the club. As the years passed, members would invite friends to attend and often they would become permanent members and added a rich diversity of interests and backgrounds to the mix. **Rambie Briggs, David Ross** and **Dennis Murphy** are charter members. The club has read over 250 books. The corona virus has forced meeting via Zoom temporarily. Failing eyesight of members has forced changed their meeting time to 10:00 AM. For more information, contact club coordinator:

**Rambie Brigg**

512-267-4832

[Email: rambiebriggs@att.net](mailto:rambiebriggs@att.net)

Go to the link and learn more about the Men's Book Club at <https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/MensBookClub/>

Next month—the Women's Book Club



2/21/08 The Men's Book Club--Back Row: Michael Rotman, Carl Hehmuth, Dave Ross, Don Brown, Matt Blackstock, Ben White, Jesse Binford, Paul Landry, Bill Briggs, and Joe Dunst Front Row: Mel Oakes, John Towery and Rambie Briggs.

## History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



November 2017 Men's Bookclub Members, Home of Mel and Pat Oakes Left to Right: Seated: Rambie Briggs, Roger Bengtson, Mel Oakes; Second Row: Michael Rotman, Dennis Murphy, Gordon Huth, Al Lindsey, Bill Briggs, Loren Stell; Back Row: Saj Maqsood, Jim Keeler, Michael Hall, Don Brown, Sam Sutherland, Carl Hehmsoth  
Missing Regulars: Dave Ross and Jim Vick