

THE VISITOR

April 2022

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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Rev. Amelia Fulbright

Inaugural Conference of Texas Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Many members and friends of CCA have been aware of the *Inaugural Conference of Texas HBCUs* held at Huston-Tillotson University this past weekend, April 1-2. Some may have read the *Austin American Statesman* article describing the conference: <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/2022/04/02/texas-hbcu-colleges-host-huston-tillotson-conference-funding-inequities/7202963001/>

I'd like to highlight an aspect of the conference that CCA can be especially proud of. Many of you may recall that nearly eighteen months ago Huston-Tillotson University and Central Texas Interfaith (CTI) entered a formal Partnership. An outcome of the Partnership is the Public Leadership Internship Program, which could not be implemented unless outside funding could be secured. Members of Congregational Church of Austin: The Rev. **Whit Bodman**, The Rev. **Liz Nash**, **Joan** and **Bill Mueller**, and **Pat** and **Mel Oakes** provided the financial support which made the Internship possible. Their generosity was recognized during the Conference Opening Ceremony on Friday, April 1st. **Whit Bodman**, **Pat** and **Mel Oakes**, Transitional Pastor **Amelia Fulbright**, and **Warinda Harris** attended the Opening Ceremonies and Congregational Church of Austin's decades-long support for Huston-Tillotson University and the recent support of the Internship Program were recognized from the podium.

The Public Leadership Internship is supervised by Dr. **Robert Ceresa**, Associate Professor of Political Science and initiator of the HTU/CTI conversations which led to the Memorandum of Understanding that founded the HTU/CTI Partnership. The first Public Leadership Intern was Ms. **Kennedy Fears**, a senior political science major; the current Intern is **ZaKara Bryson**, also a political science major.

For those attending the Conference, the powerful sense of community among Texas HBCUs across different institutional contexts (HBCUs public and private, large and small, urban and rural, religiously affiliated and not) was palpable. The conference was a huge success! 135-plus people attended, including seven of the nine Texas HBCUs. The campuses sent delegations of students, faculty/administrators, and community partners.

The Conference's core planning team, which worked in weekly meetings for over twelve months, consisted of Dr. **Robert Ceresa** – HTU, Mrs. **Fannie Akingbala** – Ebenezer Baptist Church and CTI, Dr. **Libby Doggett**, Mr. **Jeffrey Clemmons** – recent graduate of HTU, Dr. **Amanda Masino** – HTU, Ms. **Kennedy Fears** – HTU, Ms. **ZaKara Bryson** – HTU, and Dr. **Joy Penticuff** – Congregational Church of Austin and CTI.

Major Conference events included Breakout Sessions with displays of programmatic excellence, a Student Roundtable of HBCU students from across Texas, and a legislative panel that gave participants the opportunity to engage lawmakers who represent HBCUs in their legislative districts. The following lawmakers participated: State Representatives – **Sheryl Cole**, (Huston-Tillotson University, Austin), **Barbara Gervin-Hawkins**

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(St. Philips College, San Antonio), and **Jarvis Johnson** (District 139, Houston). State Senators included **Sarah Eckhardt** (Huston-Tillotson University, Austin) and **Boris Miles** (Texas Southern University, Huston). The Day One Keynote speaker was notable Dallas civil rights attorney **David Henderson**. The Day Two Keynote speaker was State Representative **Jasmine Crocket** (District 100, Dallas). **Robert F. Smith**, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Vista Equity Partners offered a video message of support. A discussion of statewide strategies with **Doug Greco** from CTI gave participants the chance to think ahead to next steps.

I thank all the members and friends of Congregational Church of Austin for your support of the Social Justice work of Central Texas Interfaith and your on-going support of Huston-Tillotson University and the HTU/CTI Partnership.

Joy Penticuff,

Moderator

CTI Leader

May Visitor Deadline April 22, 2022

Church Leadership

Trustee's Chair	Kevin Dietz
Deacon's Chair	Jen Howicz
Outreach Coordinator	Whit Bodman
Moderator	Joy Penticuff
Treasurer	Pam Tucker
Financial Secretary	Jaime Hadley
Children's Sunday School	Kay Pruett
Youth Sunday School	Jen Howicz
Clerk	Reuel Nash
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Member-at-Large	Bill Beardall
Pastor	Amelia Fulbright
Dir. of Online Ministries	Kyle Riley

Personals by Pat Oakes

The congregation had a wonderful surprise on Sunday, March 20th. Who should come walking in but **Faye** and **Andy Dierksen** with 17-month-old **Deek** and **Faye's** mom **Cameon Jacobson** who has been helping out for the past several months while **Faye** has been on partial bed rest with this pregnancy. **Faye** was told by her doctors this past week that she can get up and move around now. The new baby is not due until April 20th, but **Faye** has been assured that the baby is fine and is a good weight. We were all impressed with **Deek's** ability to keep his mask on without fussing! All four of them were back on the 27th! **Deek** definitely enjoyed the Sunday school time in the nursery during church.



3/20/22 A wonderful surprise at church--An appearance of Cameon Jacobson (Faye's mom) and Faye and Andy Dierksen with 17-month-old Deek

Sarah Darter's recent move to Killeen move was one of the most terrible experiences she's had in a long time. It just went on for weeks and weeks of boxing and packing. Her mover said he didn't have room for everything on his truck on March 12th, but he would make a second trip on March 15th with a trailer that he thought was going to be big enough. The second trip he couldn't take everything, and she couldn't leave anything behind on the property or she would get fined by her landlord. She had large gardening and final kitchen items, had to reach out for help, and ended up renting a 10-foot U-Haul truck, and her girlfriend's husband helped her pack and worked on last minute cleaning until four AM. **Sarah** worked hard on keeping a sense of per-

spective. She keeps reminding herself that all this will pass, and that at least she's not living in Ukraine where Russians are trying to murder her every day. She has a vision for ministry in Killeen once she gets settled as a massage therapist and gets money coming in. She has been hired at Hand and Stone Massage and Facial Spa in Georgetown and started on Monday, March 21st. **Sarah's** 42-year-old son **Rikki** had to go on dialysis in January of this year. Through a new program, **Rikki** was selected by an anonymous healthy donor who donated one of his kidneys. Normally it takes from 2-8 years to get a donor kidney. The surgery was on March 24th. Sarah's new address is 2801 Southwood Drive, Killeen, Texas. 76549. Her phone number and e-mail will not change.

The Sunday school is off to a good start and the teachers, and the children are having a great time. They meet at 9:45 a.m. for Sunday School and the caregivers are there until church is over. Stop by and introduce yourself to our two new nursery teachers—**Alexandra Ridulfo** and **Anne Abel**. They both come with training and experience in early childhood development and currently teach at Children's Discovery Center South during the week. We also will begin providing children's Sunday school for our elementary aged kids, taught by **Kay Pruett**, once all the teachers have come onboard.



3/27/22 Music time for the children before church—Kaye Pruett, Anne Abel, Vivienne, Alex Ridulfo, Xitlali, Roberto Hernandez, Amy Harris, and Jonathan Geer

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Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes



3/27/22 Busy Sunday schoolers and teachers—Alex Ridulfo, Xitlali, Anne Abel, Vivienne, George, and Kaye Pruett



3/26/22 Barbara Burnham, Robin Rosson, daughters Samantha (4th grade) and Rebecca (K), and mom Julia Ross, with Chester's sister Marilyn Smith after Chester's memorial

Chester Rosson's memorial service was held at the Unitarian Universalist Church on March 26th. There were about 50 in the congregation, and about a dozen online. **Chester's** sister **Marilyn Smith** from Crockett brought with her their cousin, **Debbie Melchor** from Houston. The slew of cousins were all six of **Barbara's** maternal cousins, and her brother and sister-in-law. They are from all over—Dallas, Katy, Wharton, Houston proper, and Kerrville. It was a great comfort for **Barbara** to have them there, along with a couple of friends from high school and some of her Meetup friends, one of whom is a second cousin to **Chester** and **Marilyn**. **Enid** and **Jim Ross** were there—the parents of **Julia** and grandparents of **Samantha** and **Rebecca** as were **Lynne Lemley** and **Bill Beardall**. One of their friends who watched online from Mexico asked for a list of the music. Thanks to **Amy Harris** for putting the music together for the trio. One of **Robin** and **Julia's** friends arrived late for an after-party! It was wonderful to see church friends, too, and the Texas Monthly folks (where **Chester** was a fact checker extraordinaire for many years). Many thanks to **Jen Howicz** and **Betty Bodman** who coordinated the lunch reception after the service and to **Warinda Harris** who sent a cheesecake, and to **Betty B.** and **Pat Oakes** who brought cookies.



3/26/22 Church members enjoying a chance to visit at lunch after the memorial service for Chester Rosson at the Unitarian Universalist Church—Dave Ross, Mel Oakes, Whit Bodman, Pastor Amelia Fulbright, Carolyn Thompson, Betty Bodman, and Sara Ross.

Sarah Bentley was at church on Sunday, March 20th, prior to her departure to Bethlehem, PA, on the 30th. **Sarah** quipped that it was the obvious place to move as a retired UCC pastor. Having lived in Austin for nearly 4 decades, she decided that it was time for her to move to be closer to family and long-time friends. **Sarah** served as an interim pastor for our church twice over the years. For those of us there at the service, it was good to be able to say goodbye in person.

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



3/20/22 Pat Oakes and Sarah Bentley sharing farewells after church



3/20/22 Liz and Reuel Nash visiting with Sarah Bentley on her last Sunday in town

We have not seen much of **Bill Campbell** and **Victoria Li** recently, but they have been all over the country visiting family. **Bill** had his daughter **Erin** and husband **Tormod** here the first week of March and then he and **Victoria** left for South Carolina for the second week of March to visit **Lillian, Victoria's** youngest, who is doing a surgery residency there. They had a new grandson, **Elliot Campbell**, on **Bill's** side in mid-March. Then **Bill** was sick for a few days back here, so he was not going anywhere. He is on

the mend now but was heading to Minnesota to visit kids for 10 days starting late **March**. Besides visiting children out of state, **Victoria** also has been spending time in California as her mother has had some health issues crop up. She finally found a full-time caretaker for her mom several weeks ago. She made sure to be back in Austin on election day to vote. She has been interviewing and monitoring the part time caretakers from the cameras she installed while she was there. **Bill** notes, "A hectic period of life."

John Goff and **Gail Christeson** enjoyed a short visit to the D.C. area while looking for a condo as **Gail** has started her new position as a Program Director at the National Science Foundation (NSF). Not only did they sign a contract for a condo, but they also timed their trip just right to enjoy the gorgeous Japanese cherry trees in full bloom. They were a gift in 1912 from the mayor of Tokyo — 3,000 of them — celebrating the lasting friendship between the U.S. and Japan. **John** and **Gail** will be alternating their time between Austin and D.C.



3/21/22 John Goff and Gail Christeson at the Tidal Basin in D.C. during the annual rite of spring, the Cherry Blossom Festival

Kristin Galle, daughter of former members **Omer** and **Zona Galle** who now live in Kansas, reports, "I have now been at First Christian Church Denton, TX, for one year. Relocating during a pandemic is somewhat crazy but I'm loving the congregation and living in Denton. Husband, **Brent**, is now serving as an interim pastor at Casa View Christian Church in East Dallas. But I mainly write to

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

share news about the daughters. Some of you may remember that I would bring **Mariah** and **Kaitlyn** to worship at my home congregation, while I was attending seminary in Austin, over 20 years ago. **Mariah Newell** will be ordained on 3/27/2022! She is currently serving as the "Kids, Youth & Family Minister" full time at Cypress Creek Christian Church (NW Houston.) She graduated from Lexington Theological Seminary and got married during the pandemic. **Kaitlyn Newell** and husband live in Tulsa and now have a son, **Micah**, 16 months old. She is a Research Specialist in early childhood education in the Tulsa school system. Our daughter **Rachel Hampton** and husband live in Austin. **Rachel** is chief mission officer of Lone Star Justice Alliance, a non-profit legal organization working to improve the lives of youth and emerging adults in the justice system. She recently was the top presenter at a SXSW event called Philanthropitch. Thanks for allowing a proud mama to share news about all three daughters doing wonderful work while also bringing three excellent sons-in-law and a very cute grandson into our lives. Shalom, **Kristin Galle**--baptized, confirmed, married and ordained there at Congregational Church of Austin."

The **Nash** family reports that daughter **Annie** will be performing in an off-off Broadway play (cleverly titled "Trumpilton") that was done locally near where **Annie** lives in Vermont. She was asked to be in that one but decided not to-- rehearsals out of town, etc. Then it apparently did pretty well so they decided to do it in NYC for a couple of nights. The director asked **Annie** again and this time she decided to be in it. She is playing **Hillary, Stormy**, and others, April 18th and 19th. **Annie** has a BFA from Naropa University in Performing Arts. **Liz** is not sure of the process for deciding to do it in NYC but they are doing it in the Actor's Temple Theatre, a synagogue that is also a theater. It's not "on Broadway" but nearby. And **Reuel** and **Liz** are definitely going. They have vacation club time near there and have really missed going during the pandemic. Their last time in the area was in February right before the pandemic to see the Friends Congregational choir singing the Rutter Requiem with a larger group in Carnegie Hall. **Liz** grew up going to visit her grandmother (her mom's stepmother) who lived in Flushing (in Queens) and was an economics professor at Queens College. Her mom spent plenty of time there growing up.

THE SOUTHWEST REGION AND CYPRESS CREEK
CHRISTIAN CHURCH INVITE YOU TO THE ORDINATION OF

Mariah Newell

Sunday March 27th, 5pm
at
Cypress Creek Christian Church
6823 Cypresswood Drive
Spring, TX 77379

Reception of light refreshments to
follow

Friends and Family,
I look forward to sharing this special worship
with you where I will be Ordained as a
Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ). Whether you attend online or in
person, thank you for joining in this
celebration.
Love,
Mariah

RSVP to Mariah Newell at
mariah.n.newell@gmail.com

Livestream viewing of the service
will be available at cypresscreek.cc



2022 Annie Nash

3/27/22 Kristin Galle's daughter Mariah Newell's
ordination invitation

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

Ann Locasio shares, "For what it's worth, I potted six herbs as baby sprigs for the mini herb garden outside my door. Basil, rosemary, mint, sorrel and dill. If all goes well my pasta sauce, lamb, salmon and salads will be fresh and healthy this year and the mint sprigs in my iced tea will be pleasant. I hope to host some of you at a dinner party once it's safe to do it." Happy gardening, **Ann!!**

Donna Cravens, our stellar office administrator has good news to report. She says, "This is Christi. (See photos.) Her name was derived from Christmas Carol which is what the Berg Life Rescue people named her because she was brought in on 12/25/21. An old friend that once adopted from Berg Life Rescue told me about them and after my research, I heard there was an adoption event the following Saturday. When I got to the event in Cypress, Texas (just a little north of Houston), she was such a beautiful and well-behaved doggie, I knew she was the one for me. I found her on [Petfinders.com](https://www.petfinders.com), Berg Life Rescue's mission is to save homeless pets from the streets and shelters of Houston by utilizing temporary foster homes to get the animals ready for local adoption or transport to other rescue organizations. <https://www.facebook.com/bergfosterlife/>. They are wonderful people and anyone that wants to foster or adopt should contact them. This precious little girl has already changed my life for the better!!! She is my constant companion and, of course, my best friend and exercise buddy..... She was placed in my life just when I was beginning to wonder if I would ever find the dog I was praying for. I really have always loved miniature poodles. Over my lifetime I've had about 6 poodles or poodle mixes. When I was 'MUCH' younger, I adopted senior dogs, because those are usually the first to be put down due to crowding but it also means you have less time with them. After those I tried for a bit younger dog, so I'd have more time with them. My last 2 were, of course, my little poodle/bichon sisters, Diamond & Sandy. They have now gone to the Rainbow Bridge where they can hang out and run around like puppies with all the other much loved and missed dogs. Christi is 5-6 years old according to my vet and this probably means she has a long life ahead her. It broke my heart that **Debby Kohrt's** little Izzy was so

young when she passed, but I'm hoping I get at least ten plus years out of this little girl."



The day I brought her home Saturday March 5, 2022



What Christi looks like when we're here at the church

Carolyn Thompson says she had a very satisfying trip to Massachusetts in mid-March. "It was my first venture out beyond a drive to the coast, but there were no problems with the airline or other passengers. I usually fly Southwest through the Baltimore-Washington airport that is not too large and has a good selection of eateries midway between the two ends of the terminal." She went to see the annual musical at Somerville High School where her granddaughter, **Emily**, is a senior and was the Deputy

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

Stage Manager. The whole production came off well, even the sound when all the actors were wearing masks! Good job, **Emily**. Some early spring weather allowed a long lunch at an outdoor table with a friend, and I saw more old friends at church on Sunday. Here is a picture of the reading nook in the sanctuary at First Church Cambridge. Young children can pick up an activity packet or a book and take it to the pew with their parents or sit here. We may not have so much space at CCA, but a shelf would suffice for some picture books for kids too old for the nursery." **Carolyn** highly recommends the new Porter Square Hotel which is right on Massachusetts Ave. across from Porter Square shopping center and the Alewife MBTA subway station. Harvard Square is within walking distance or a short bus ride. The hotel has coffee in the rooms, a business center and a bar/restaurant with outdoor dining. The rooms are small but efficient, and it is a great location for business or vacation with easy access to downtown Boston. **Carolyn** did not see much of **Emily** because she was so busy with the musical, but there were good visits with the rest of the family. She says, "I got to go to my old haunts: a favorite hardware store that always has an amazing new selection of housewares, a wonderful independent bookstore, and even the local LL Bean store for old times' sake!"



3/20/22 Carolyn thought maybe we could adapt this idea which she found at her former church in Boston--for older children to use while sitting with their parents during church

Amy Harris, our talented trio violinist, was delighted to have her folks in the congregation on Sunday, March 20th. **Karen** and **Doug Harris** were visiting here for several days from Grand Lake, CO. They had also been to the Houston area where they visited their daughter **Katie** who moved to the Katy area last year. Music lovers in the congregation remember well attending **Amy's** marvelous recital at UT and meeting her parents in 2007.

Long ago member **Dennis Schneider** (early 1970s) who lives in Tokyo had a nerve-wracking experience recently. He says, "We had some excitement with a fairly big earthquake during the night of March 16th. It was certainly scary in Tokyo, but with little serious damage. However, it was in the same location as the 3-11-2011 quake in northeast Japan, and there was some serious property damage there and three deaths." We are glad you are OK, **Dennis**, and grateful the damage wasn't worse than it already was.

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes



Hildegard Kuehne Everett, a dear friend, and a life-long member of the church (her parents were very early members of the church) taught me how to make these Easter eggs more than 50 years ago, just as the old German settlers did in Fredericksburg--using bluebonnets and the papery part of onion skins. **Hildegard's** mother and father (b. 1872—a very early member of the UT physics department) were the children of German immigrants. She learned from friends and family how to make these beautiful eggs. The bluebonnets are already starting to bloom this year and may be gone before Easter, so making them may not be possible--but one can always dye the onion skin eggs. You could even make the bluebonnet eggs a week or so in advance.

Children might also enjoy the process—with parental supervision, of course. Some of you may have bluebonnets nearby which you can pick. If you can get bluebonnets, you will need 4-5 per egg. Start right now saving onion skins—here's hoping that stores have onions in supply (the yellow ones work best—purple will also work). You will need white unboiled eggs, strips of cloth about 2 inches wide and 8-10 inches long, straight pins, a pot and lid for each group of eggs, and water. You use the same technique with each type of coloring agent. Take the uncooked egg in your hands and place the flowers or onion skins as close together as you can manage around the egg. Then take the cloth strips and carefully wrap the egg as closely/tightly as you can—don't break the egg—until you have wrapped the whole egg. Carefully take a straight pin and secure the strip so that it will stay wound around the egg. Continue with the rest of the eggs. Place them in the pan, cover with water and a lid, bring to a boil, let boil for one minute, and then let sit off the heat for 30 minutes or so—more won't hurt. Gently drain the eggs, cover with cold water (maybe put in some ice cubes) and let them sit until cool. Drain and remove the pins, strips, and the skins/flowers. Store in the refrigerator until ready to delight you family/friends with your Easter creations. Enjoy! Happy Easter!!