

THE VISITOR

April 2025

The Congregational Church of Austin

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United Church of Christ

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Ginny Brown Daniel, Interim Pastor**



I was never a dog person until 2021. After I completed my ministry as conference minister and during the pandemic, my husband and I decided to adopt two dogs: Titan (the little one David is holding) and Sissy (the mix I am holding). It's amazing that they have such different personalities. Titan has an energetic personality and no one has told him he's only 6 pounds. Sissy is more reserved but very protective of our yard from those pesky squirrels. And both exude unconditional love. And our two cats, Shoppie and Nubbie, have opened up in expressing their desire to be petted/loved (on their own time of course).

What can we learn from our furry family that we've had in the past or those we have today? In what ways do they teach us how to unconditionally love ourselves and others especially in these uncertain times? Sissy and Titan hope that you will find time to love and be loved as God loves you unconditionally.

Blessings, Ginny

May Visitor Deadline April 25, 2025

Church Leadership

Trustee's Chair	Bill Campbell
Deacon's Chair	Roberto H. & Sarah D.
Moderator	Liz Nash
Treasurer	Pam Tucker
Financial Secretary	Jaime Hadley
Children's Sunday School	Kay Pruett
Youth Sunday School	Open
Clerk	Reuel Nash
Historians	Pat & Mel Oakes
Newsletter Personals Editor	Pat Oakes
Member-at-Large	Bill Beardall
Pastor	Ginny Brown Daniel
Dir. of Online Ministries	Serge Martinez
Director of Music	Laura Martin

Personals by Pat Oakes

Pastor **GINNY BROWN DANIEL** (who was going on vacation) asked Rev. **Sarah Darter** (retired UCC clergy) if she would lead the service on March 16th during Women's Herstory Month. Sarah says, "I wanted to do something for Women's Herstory Month and **Susanna Annesley Wesley** is somebody I have read about and admire. I think I own about four books on her. I carefully picked out scriptures that I knew that she would have been familiar with. Doing some research, I found her 16 rules for raising children (she had 25 children!!). Then I found a plethora of true stories about what happened in her life and in the lives of her children. With all of the research I did, I had about an hour plus material and tried to cut it down to 40 minutes. It was a great pleasure to do and have many of my friends watch it online live and then my family show up at the service — it was great. My official status is retired UCC Clergy but I may be changing that if I get a Hospice chaplaincy in the near future. " Here is the link if you would like to learn more about **Susanna Wesley**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ghMf30FYrU>



3/16/25 Sarah Darter as Susanna Wesley-mother of 25 children including John and Charles Wesley

Ann Locasio reports, "I saw 'Hamilton' at Bass Concert Hall on opening night, March 25th. As I entered the venue I thought, 'I've wanted to see this forever. Tonight's the night.' I was curious about the musical which is one of the most acclaimed ever, winning several Tony awards, a Grammy, and a

Pulitzer Prize. It was utter inspiration to tell Revolutionary War era American history using a diverse cast and including many African-American actors. The hip-hop music lyrics were brilliant and delivered at lightning speed. Also memorable was the very white and comical King **George III** sharing his thoughts on the Revolution with the audience. His words amounted to, 'I need to kill them so they will love me more.' The play made me both laugh and sob. It was wrenching when Hamilton's son, and later Hamilton himself, got shot. I won't soon forget **Eliza Hamilton's** long, drawn out wail of anguish as she leaned over her son's lifeless body. I doubt there were many dry eyes in the hall at that moment. The play also made me think. Imagine a musical inspiring deep reflection; this one did. It was highly relevant for our own time and I couldn't help but notice common themes. There were so many messages embedded in the play, one of them being ordinary people shaping history by making extraordinary and difficult choices. At the end, as I somehow knew they would, the entire Bass Concert Hall audience rose in perfect unity for a thunderous standing ovation which lasted several minutes. It was a fitting tribute to a production of the finest quality. Indeed, a person could see Hamilton more than once and notice new messages each time. I have several friends who have done so. The creator of Hamilton, **Lin-Manuel Miranda**, is in a class by himself."

There are other serious 'Hamilton' fans among us, particularly **Sam** and **Becca Rosson**, granddaughters of **Barbara Burnham** whose son **Robin** was our cellist for several years and daughter-in-law, **Julia Ross** who played with the trio for some time — in fact, that is where **Robin** and **Julia** met. **Sam**, a 7th grader, sent this review of "Hamilton." "I went to see "Hamilton" on Wednesday the 26th, and it was absolutely amazing. Hamilton is my favorite musical and I had been looking forward to seeing it for months, and they did NOT let me down. The singing and acting and dancing were all incredible, not to mention the lighting and orchestra. I also cried, I think, three times during it. The touring cast was amazing, and I'm so glad I was able to go see their production of my #1 favorite musical." Younger sister **Becca**, a 3rd grader, also sent her review, "My experience watching 'Hamilton' live was very cool, but it was also funny. While there were many other people in the room where it happened, I still thought that it was very impressive that they did all that hard work! Work! If you have seen 'Hamilton,' please note that there will be many quotes from

Personals (cont.)
by Pat Oakes

Wow. There were lots of people laughing, so it was kind of hard to focus on the show. But I will still tell the story of that night.”



3/26/25 Sam and Becca Rosson with their mom Julia Ross ready to enjoy the long-awaited performance of "Hamilton"

It was good to hear from former deacon **Anya Toskey-Silva** in Monterrey, Mexico recently. She wrote, "**Kevin** and I are doing well (they married in October of 2023), thanks for checking in on us! I think the combination of laundry days and just feeling odd broadcasting myself online for services after so long has gotten me out of the routine of worshipping online with you all. However, we did just buy a washing machine (woo hoo!), which is a great excuse to log in again on Sunday mornings. I started teaching full time last spring, which keeps me busy and thankfully paid. I also started teaching dance after school this fall, which has been a fun challenge! After a year and a half here, I am finally feeling settled for now and have learned a lot more Spanish, gracias a dios. It didn't snow here, but it did freeze! I try to stay updated on the US by listening to KUT in the mornings, and I commiserate with you. Es un desmadre!

Jonathan Geer shares, "We started a 5-week road trip out to CA and back with our pop up camper on March 2nd and I've finally had a moment to do a quick post about it! Our first stop was in Seminole Canyon (in Texas) and I was hoping to be able to see some of the historic pictographs, but they all require a tour guide on specific days (poor planning on my part!). It was still a great first stop to ease into this

5-week journey though. Our 2nd stop was supposed to be Guadalupe Mountains National Park, but we were driving through the most intense dust storm I've ever experienced in my life and we decided to just keep on trucking all the way to El Paso. The air quality at the time of arrival was designated as 'Hazardous' so we decided to just stay in a motel for the night. Then we booked a last minute stay at the KOA in Las Cruces and it was awesome. I haven't been in a lot of KOA's but this was by far the best one we've ever stayed at. So we bummed around there for a bit and eventually got back on the road to visit White Sands, which was a total blast. I have great memories of the park from a trip with my family as a kid and now the cycle continues." **Jonathan and Roberto, Xitlali and Sebastian** will be able to share stories in person as they are to be in Austin for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Then they are off to Monterrey, Mexico, for about two years to live closer to **Roberto's** family and for the kids to become really fluent in Spanish. Oh, how they will be missed!!!



3/18/25 Roberto and Xitlali at White Sands National Park in New Mexico



3/18/25 Xitlali enjoying the white sands at the aptly named White Sands National Park

Personals (cont.)
by Pat Oakes



3/18/25 Jonathan with Sebastian at White Sands National Park



Mid-March, 2025 Church Cellist Liz Lee and violinist Amy Harris at the Papago Golf Classic in Phoenix, AZ

Amy Harris (our trio violinist) reports, “**Liz** (**Lee** — our trio cellist) and I went to Phoenix, Arizona, for the Desert Classic golf tournament held at Papago Golf Club. We were there from March 9th to the 11th for a three-day tournament. This included lots of golf and talks from really famous golf instructors. Most important we had a lot of fun golfing, meeting other great ladies and since it was a partner’s tournament, we had so many cute matching outfits! **Liz** is an incredible golfer, and we ended up with a lot of high-level golfers at our level. We went because I started one year ago (March 1, 2024), and it was our goal for me to be good enough to at least participate. **Liz**, however, has been golfing since she was a teenager in New York, though she didn’t get on the course until she came to Austin for her doctorate. I did well enough to not embarrass myself too much. **Liz** did great! While we didn’t win any prizes in our grouping, we went to celebrate women playing golf, and dress in cute outfits. The idea is that we’ll keep working and do more things like this in the future! There were 200 women there, and this was the second week of a similar event that happened the week before (with a different group of 200 women).

We haven’t seen **Jo Jensen** in a while, but she has been enjoying using her RV and traveling hither and yon. As a sweet break from the political turmoil, she was on the square in Temple, TX, in mid-March to see the Budweiser Clydesdales. At about 2200 pounds each and over six feet tall at the shoulders, Clydesdales are gorgeous creatures! The crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge was part of her solo round trip to Maine and the delightful surprise was that a dear friend was nearby to join her for a brief walk across the bridge and back sharing their thoughts and memories of that fateful Bloody Sunday.



Mid-March, 2025 Church Cellist Liz Lee and violinist Amy Harris at the Papago Golf Classic in Phoenix, AZ



3/25 The Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL

Photos cont. on next page

Personals (cont.)
by Pat Oakes



3/25 Jo Jensen on the right with a friend crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL



3/13/25 Drivers and Dalmatian with the Budweiser Clydesdales in Temple TX



3/13/25 Impressive Clydesdales in Temple, Tx

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!!