

THE VISITOR

February 2023

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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Rev. Amelia Fulbright, Transitional Pastor



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Black History Month at CCA

Dear Members & Friends of the Congregational Church of Austin,

As many of you know, February is Black History Month in the wider culture, and the UCC also has designated Sunday, Feb. 12 as Racial Justice Sunday within our denomination. We've got a few opportunities at CCA to lean into these observances:

Centering Black Perspectives and Experiences in Worship

In the planning of worship this month, special attention is being given to playing and singing music by African-American composers, using images that depict Black lives and experiences, and hearing the ideas of Black theologians. Specifically, I'll be drawing from the writings of Dr. Willie James Jennings in my sermons.

Special Offering for Huston-Tillotson

At our Annual Meeting in January, we voted to include a \$200 annual donation to Huston-Tillotson University. In addition, the Coordinating Council would like to collect a special offering for HT during Black History Month. Members and friends are invited to give as they are able to support the mission of HT, one of our remarkable yet under resourced Texas HBCUs. If you would like to contribute to this special offering, please designate your check or Tithe.ly donation to (HT Black History Month Offering).

New Book by Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III—

Dancing in the Darkness: Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times

Finally, the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Pastor of Trinity UCC in Chicago, has published a new book that draws from the spiritual resources of the Black Church tradition to help us all learn how to consecrate the chaos around us and to see the opportunities for joy, creativity, and renewal in the midst of it all. At the link below, Rev. Traci Blackmon interviews Rev. Dr. Moss about the stories and ideas in his book. It is a wonderful stand alone interview, and it might inspire you to buy the book yourself! I am in the process of listening to it on Audible and would love to host a short-term discussion of it during the season of Lent, probably beginning the first week in March. If you are interested in reading and discussing along with me and other folks at CCA, please send me an email at pastor@congregationchurchofaustin.org so we can find the time that works best for most people.

<https://www.ucc.org/event/dancing-in-the-darkness-with-rev-dr-otis-moss-iii-rev-traci-blackmon/>

This month is a wonderful chance for us to recommit to the work of racial justice that already is part of our congregation's history. May we take the next faithful steps on that journey.

Peace,
Amelia

March Visitor Deadline February 22, 2023

Church Leadership

Trustee's Chair	Kevin Dietz
Deacon's Chair	John Goff
Outreach Coordinator	Joy Penticuff
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
Member-at-Large	Bill Beardall
Pastor	Amelia Fulbright
Dir. of Online Ministries	Britt Hicks
Director of Music	Laura Martin

Personals by Pat Oakes

It was a joy to welcome four new members to the church on Sunday, Jan. 22nd. Three of the folks we know very well. **Amy Harris**, violinist for the trio grew up in Denver going to Parkview UCC, one of the first Open and Affirming churches in the area. She went to undergrad at University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO. After graduation, **Amy** moved to Cincinnati, OH, to attend the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. While there, she joined Philippus UCC where she served as the youth choir director and was a paid member of the choir. When **Amy** moved to Austin, she knew she had to find a good church home because of the integral part it had in her life during her work on her Master's degree. **Amy** says, "The instant I walked through the doors, and saw a string trio leading the service, I knew my search was over!" She has been a part of CCA since 2006. **Roberto Hernandez** was born and raised in Monterey, Mexico, and moved to the U.S. in May 2008. He earned his Bachelor's in Architecture at the University of Nuevo León. **Roberto** has worked for an engineering firm in NW Austin since 2015. He started coming to CCA once he met **Jonathan**. After being married twice to each other, **Roberto** and **Jonathan** now have two children - daughter **Xitlali** (2020) and son **Sebastian Kai** (2022). **Roberto** likes camping, creating, designing, and playing tennis. Above all, he loves being a parent. **Jonathan Geer** was born in Denton, TX, yet grew up primarily in Waxahachie. He earned his Bachelor's in Film Scoring from Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. **Jonathan** started composing music full-time when he moved to Austin in 2008. He wishes he would have found CCA sooner. **Jonathan** met his husband, **Roberto**, in 2015 and they were married twice (ask them about this sometime). The happy couple married first in September 2017, then again at the church in 2018. The origami birds that float above the aisle were part of the decorations for the **Hernandez-Geer** wedding. **Jonathan** prefers to go by **Jonathan**, yet his family and friends call him **Jonny** as coined by his nieces. He enjoys cooking, gardening, camping, origami, and photography. **Jonathan** took up sewing during the pandemic but doesn't have time for it now. **Shelby Nowland** is someone we will be getting to know. He grew up in Terrell, TX, and is the current Pastor of Labyrinth Progressive Campus Ministry. He graduated from Texas Wesleyan University and Brite Divinity School, both in Fort Worth. **Shelby** was ordained to

ministry in July of 2022 at St. John's UCC where his partner, Rev. **Jacob Brenton**, is the pastor. They live in the Waco area with their dog Waylon (after Waylon Jennings) and cat Naomi (after Naomi Judd and from the book of Ruth - Naomi renamed "Mara" which means bitter as she is an elderly bitter cat). In his free time, **Shelby** enjoys knitting, reading, and traveling.



1/22/23 Mischievous Xitlali Hernandez-Geer strikes a pose on the day her dads joined the church



1/22/23 Four new members joined the church--Deacon Jen Howicz, Amy Harris, Roberto Hernandez, Jonathan Geer, Shelby Nowland, Pastor Amelia, CJ Wood, and John Goff

Personals by Pat Oakes



1/22/23 Welcome to 4 new members--Amy Harris, Roberto Rodriguez, Jonathan Geer, and Shelby Nowland

Ann Locasio had a visit recently with **Crazy Carl Hickerson**. She says, "That's his legal name. If you ever went to Esther's Follies, you might remember the guy in the bikini who spun flowers on his nose. That's the guy. He was voted Austin's 'Best Local Eccentric' by the Austin Chronicle in 1995. **Crazy Carl** really isn't crazy. He's more of a visionary, a man ahead of his time, who lived out of his imagination and sold 'Highly Overpriced Flowers' on Sixth Street in the 1970s to pay for his living expenses. He's in a nursing home now and I went to see him to thank him for giving me an interview for my book. He wanted to play his trombone for me while I was there, but we decided that the other residents in the nearby dining room might not want a blast from a brass instrument over their supper. The book I'm writing is about exploring Austin on foot for five years. Its working title is 'Talk To Me, Austin.' **Crazy Carl** had many anecdotes about Austin history, and about how he won a prize at Spamarama once, and how he once ran for governor and his campaign office was right by **Ann Richards'** campaign headquarters."



2022 Crazy Carl Hickerson

Barbara Burnham says, "A couple of days after Christmas, I developed bronchitis, asthma, and shingles, all at once! I recognized the signs of shingles right away and went to an urgent clinic so I could start an antiviral. The rash is on my trunk, mainly in front. It never developed into a terrible rash. The main problem has been the nerve pain associated with shingles. Think of a bad toothache and you'll get the idea. I do have medication for nerve pain, though I also found that chocolate helps! One of my Zoom friends delivered a bag of chocolates and a bottle of wine, all of which helped in various ways. I managed to keep working, although I did take off a few days when the bronchitis was bad. Oh, and regarding the IRS where I work, we processed 12 million paper documents from the time I started in late May to mid-December. We completely cleaned out the backlog that had accumulated during the pandemic., I am still enjoying the work, and we have plenty of it now, as people are sending in late returns. Please, friends, if you haven't gotten your shingles vaccine, do it now. You do not want to go through the pain of this disease!"

Warinda Harris and family welcomed a new member of the family on 12/16/22. She was discovered by **Alden** in a garbage can at around 4 weeks old. Since coming home to the **Harris** household, she has chewed and ruined many shoes, gotten into several scrapes with Radar the cat (who outweighs her by 15 pounds), attempted to remove her lead to take herself for a walk and argued with the dog in the mirror who greatly resembles her. All in all, things are going well!



1/23 Meet Dasha Harris

Personals by Pat Oakes

Don Miles has had a busy time over the past two months, but he is now getting settled in his new home. He says, "I'm at 'The Wellington,' a fairly new senior independent living facility in Liberty, Missouri. They opened this past August, and I'm impressed with their services, food, health care facility, and with my fellow residents. My daughter **Juliette** and I checked out three communities a short distance from where she lives, and Liberty had by far the best civic and cultural infrastructure and ambience. I went for several weeks with no phone or computer, so I'm just able to get in touch now. My cell phone fell into the sheets at the hospital in Lakeway before I moved. It was never found, so I'm starting all over to build a list of contacts (e-mail address donandmini@gmail.com.) My address here is 1051 Kent St., Apt. 3020, Liberty, MO 64068. My daughter **Juliette Ritzman** is a member of the Kansas City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and has invited me to some of their events. The director at the Hispanic Chamber has already read the latest edition of my nonfiction book (**2nd edition of Cinco de Mayo; What Is Everybody Celebrating?**), and we had a nice hour-long chat in early December. **Juliette** is listed as an "ambassador" for the chamber, and I'll become a member shortly so I'm sure we'll put a few events together. The book, by the way, won "Best Latino Nonfiction" from the "Indie" awards put out by the National Independent Authors Association last year. Things are looking up! Liberty has lots of community groups and events, so I'm sure I'll get involved with some of them." **Don** says "hi" to everyone!



1/23 Don & Juliette @ KC Hispanic Chamber Happy Hour

Fran Briggs reports, "Never a dull moment with our grandchildren **Giovanni** and **Stella Fracasso**. **Giovanni** broke his arm skiing just before Christmas. It was his right wrist, and he is right-handed, but it wasn't displaced, and he got good medical care. Interestingly, the medic signed him up for Medicaid since he's a student so it's not costing him anything. Colorado has problems, but it's better than Texas in many ways. **Stella** returned from her Gap Year program in Ireland and is going to Ecuador this spring to join the Amigos program. Grandparents **Rambie** and **Fran** are grateful when they find time to visit."

It was good to catch up with **Tommie Pinkard** in late January. She lives in a retirement community in Brevard, NC, called College Walk. She and **Doyal** moved there about seven years ago—**Doyal's** sibling and spouse were there and loved where they were. Sadly, **Doyal** died shortly after he and **Tommie** moved, and since then **Doyal's** family members also have died, but **Tommie** is still with us. She will be 95 next All Souls Day. (Nov. 1) She is quite startled to realize that her eldest son **Chris** is 71! She wishes she had family nearby, but she really enjoys where she is. She recently moved from an assisted living section at College Walk to a more specialized assisted living unit in the same community called The Inn. She loves her new digs—has a one bedroom apartment, 3 meals a day, lots of activities for the residents, a good game room, a piano to play, and a very welcome large bathtub where residents are treated once a week or so to a safe, warm bath. She wants folks to know that she now sleeps in her recliner chair in the living area because of her COPD, but now she has a guest room if anyone in our church family is nearby, she would love for you to come for a visit. She says the folks who are there to help are wonderful. A group of retired nurses in the area are great about taking residents to various doctors' appointments. **Tommie** admits that she sometimes forgets names and such, but she does remember one doctor's name very easily. His name is **Dr. Graham**—and she loves Graham crackers! Her sense of humor is still intact. Her new address is 55 College Lane, Apt. 94, Brevard, NC 28712.

The **Dierksen's** went to Florida (from chilly Oswego, NY) in January to see **Grambu** and **Grandpa Jim** (**Faye's** parents), it was a whirlwind of a trip and getting there was a nightmare, but they enjoyed a few sunny days with **AuMe** (**Aunt Megan**) and a few more days with **Doddy** (**Andy**) then

Personals by Pat Oakes

Mama and Astrid flew home and Deek got to spend a week with just Grambu! They can't wait till they can go back again!



1/23 Faye Dierksen enjoying a beautiful sunset on Venice Beach, FL, with Astrid



1/23 The Dierksen family, Faye, Astrid, Andy, and Deek enjoying warmer weather in Venice, FL



1/23 Faye's mom AKA Grambu checking out a fire engine in Venice, FL with grandson Deek

Congratulations to **Priscilla Crosswell Perkins Grew**, professor emerita at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, who was recently awarded the 2022 Geological Society of America President's Medal at a ceremony in Denver in October.

<https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/About/awards/GSA/Awards/2022/presMedal.aspx>.

Her husband **Ed Grew**, is on the faculty at the University of Maine in the department of Earth and Climate Sciences and was able to attend the meeting in Denver, too. Her late father, **Dr. James Crosswell Perkins**, chaired the Department of Religion and Philosophy at the HBCU Huston-Tillotson College in Austin, Texas, from 1957 to 1970 and was very involved in our church until his death in 1980.

(<https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/CAHistory/JamesCrosswellPerkins.html>)

Priscilla has visited with us many times over the years. She is retired from the University of Nebraska and lives in Lincoln. Because of the pandemic and **Priscilla** and her husband living in 2 different places, **Priscilla** was finally able to spend Dec.20th - Jan. 12th with **Ed**, their first Christmas together since Dec. 2019! FYI **Priscilla** and **Pat Oakes** are distant cousins as they are both descendants of **John Alden** and **Priscilla Mullins** who came to Plymouth, MA, in 1620 on the Mayflower. This fact was discovered when **Mel** and **Pat's** daughter **Elizabeth Alden** (after

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

after a favorite great-uncle of **Pat's**) **Oakes** was christened at the church in 1967. **Dr. Perkins** asked about her middle name after the service, and they soon discovered the **Alden** family connection. There are about 1 million **Alden** descendants—**John** and **Priscilla** had 10 or 11 children who reproduced mightily over the years!!



10/9/22 GSA President Barbara Dutrow awards the GSA President's Medal to Priscilla Grew '62. Photo credit: Geological Society of America, photo by Bill Cronin.



1/23 Callum James Scott being held by his big sister Maisie--grandchildren of Edith and David Scott, Sr.

It has been a long while since we have heard from **Jaana Rehbein** but we do know that her daughter **Ella** is doing very well. She is 12 years old, in 7th grade, enjoying school, playing the violin, dancing ballet, learning to play tennis, and has just started to explore the potential of her new sewing machine.

David and **Edith Scott** and their 2 young children **David, Jr.** and **Susan** were here in Austin for a little more than a year in the mid-1980s. They loved being here while **David, Sr.** worked at Motorola, they became a part of the church family and have stayed in touch ever since. **Edith** writes from Strathaven near Glasgow, "It's been a busy time since Christmas and we're getting ready to go to Madeira at the end of this week. **David, Jr.**, and his wife **Nicola** have had another baby. **Callum James** is a little brother for **Maisie.**" **David, Jr.** and family live about 3 hours away, closer to Edinburgh and Balmoral castle, and the distilleries area of Scotland. **Edith** notes that is not far away by Texas standards, but it is a long way in Scotland.

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes

It has been a while since the church has scheduled a retreat at Slumber Falls what with Covid, the time of transition, and our busy schedules. The oldest pictures I have go back to the early '70s, but as far as I remember, folks were going to retreats at Slumber Falls before that. There were so many options when we were there-- fellowship, sharing meals, playing games, talking about the future of the church, singing together, worshipping together, etc.

When **Mel** and I first started going to Slumber Falls, we had 3 young children and most women in the church were not working in a salaried position. That meant that for a number of us, we worked out the menus, bought the food, packed it up and brought it to Slumber Falls—and then we cooked the meals! It seems rather quaint now. In later years, we hired and paid for staff to prepare the meals which made it easier in some ways, but we lost the fun of cooking together. Most memorable (no photo available) was the time when we were trying to light the huge oven in the gas stove in the kitchen of the dining hall. The pilot light did not seem to be working, so **Sara Ross** stuck her head in the oven, lit a match—and boom! She jumped back from the stove and her bangs were singed. It scared those of us in the kitchen half to death! Fortunately, she did not get burned, although her face looked a little flushed for several hours.



1975 Slumber Falls retreat-- Clark Hubbs and Rizer Everett playing chess



10/16-17/1976 Fall church retreat at Slumber Falls—all folks from the church--Billie Bess Sastrup and a son seated at the left front, Mel Oakes in line with beige shirt with Herb and Nancy Pickett and son to the right, Jean Appel and Sara Ross on either side of the support beam on the back left—and others—additions and corrections most welcome

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



10/16-17/1976 Church retreat at Slumber Falls—worship service--back left--Cathy and Clark Hubbs--front left--Laverne Johnston and her daughter and son--back right Rollin and Betsy Russell, Judy Cole, next row forward--Beth, Mel, Sarah Oakes, Weldon and Marie Scheel, ?. Eleanor Towery, Pat Oakes, John Towery in front—corrections/additions to the IDs would be most welcome



1977 Making music at the church retreat at Slumber Falls, Spring, 1977--John Camden, Beth, Mel, Mardie and Pat Oakes, Beth Russell, Heather (or Kristen Galle) and maybe Judy Cole,?, Marshall and Laverne Johnston, Omer Galle and his 12 string guitar, and Michael Ross and ?

Photos cont. on the next page

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



10/1982 Fall retreat at Slumber Falls--Jean Appel, Setsuko Kaneda, Mel Oakes, Fran Briggs, Dennis and Nodie Murphy—enjoying a hymn sing



10/2000 Fall retreat at Slumber Falls--around the table, Tommie Pinkard, Steve Domingue, Norma Hawes, Setsuko Kaneda, Nodie Murphy, Cathy Hubbs, Yoshi Kaneda

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



10/2000 Fall retreat at Slumber Falls --Yoshi Kaneda with Dr. Michael Murray, resource leader as we discuss the future of the church and its location



4/28/07 Church retreat at Slumber Falls when Jaime Hadley was baptized---l-r Nodie Murphy, ?, Tommie Pinkard, Mathis Blackstock, Barbara Burnham, Liz Nash, Betty Bodman, Hannah Norton, and Jaime Hadley

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



4/28/07 Church retreat at Slumber Falls when Jaime Hadley was baptized



4/24/10 A beautiful afternoon at Slumber Falls April 24, 2010—watching the folks on the rafts is very entertaining