

THE VISITOR

June 2022

The Congregational Church of Austin United Church of Christ

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

(512) 472-2370

E-mail: ucausti@swbell.net

Web site: congregationalchurchofaustin.org

***If you wish to unsubscribe to The Visitor Newsletter please contact us at ucausti@swbell.net**

Rev. Amelia Fulbright, Transitional Pastor



In my sermon on June 5, I tried to craft a description of the Church and its purposes. I thought it might be useful for us to keep this list at the forefront of our minds as we continue to discern our church’s mission for the future, so below I’ve included an excerpt of the sermon. **What would you add to this list? The Church is where...?**

Excerpt from June 5 reflection, “In Praise Of Showing Up”

“Pentecost reminds us that a new world is possible, and the Church is where we practice the kind of world we long for, what Jesus called The Kingdom of God. This is rehearsal space. Acts 2 describes how the earliest gatherings of believers bore witness to what was possible:

44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds[j] to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home[k] and ate their food with glad and generous[l] hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Church is where we practice letting go of scarcity mindsets and embracing a vision of abundant life. Where we learn that the more we invest in this community of faith, the more we can expect to harvest from its growth.

The Church is where, at our best, we practice learning to speak and listen with people very different from ourselves.

The Church is where we learn to give our lives to something bigger than ourselves.

The Church is where we can discover, individually and collectively, our gifts and calling to do justice and love kindness and walk humbly in the world.

The Church is a sanctuary from violence and an antidote to the pervasive loneliness and alienation of these times.

But the Church is not an escape from reality; it is an *alternative* reality.

If we find ourselves doing these things here in this space, then we are the Church. And wherever these things are happening in the world, there too is the Church.

Wherever people are showing up for each other to make a better world, the Spirit moves and hope can get a foothold.

It is so tempting to despair about the state of the world these days, but the Spirit beckons to us this day: **KEEP SHOWING UP.**”

May it be so. Amen.

Pastor Amelia

July - August Visitor Deadline July 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	Pending

Personals by Pat Oakes

The church suffered another loss of a long-time, much-loved member on April 23, 2022. **Don Brown** died at home in his sleep from complications of a fast-moving form of Parkinson's. Because of the pandemic, we were not able to visit **Don** because of his compromised health, but phone conversations were possible and enjoyable. **Don** and **Sharon** joined the church on Sept. 28, 1997. Both of them were active in the ministries of the church, **Don** being particularly handy at church work parties. For many years **Don** and **Sharon** picked up **Nancy Brown** at her home every Sunday and brought her home after church, something that **Nancy** so appreciated after she no longer was driving. For more about **Don** and his life, go to the History Corner at the end of the Visitor. **Sharon** lives right next door to their son, Travis County Judge **Andy Brown**, their daughter-in-law **Sara**, and their 2 grandchildren **Hattie** and **Franklin**. They enjoyed several trips to Argentina where they enjoyed dancing the tango. A celebration of **Don's** life was held at Esquina Tango on Sunday, May 22, where **Don** and **Sharon** enjoyed perfecting their tango skills in years past. A number of dignitaries were there including Mayor **Steve Adler** and retired Commissioner of Education **Ken Ashworth**. **Don** served as Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education under **Ken Ashworth** and then as Commissioner of Higher Education himself for a number of years. **Don** loved hats and one of the things he did to break occasional tension at board meetings was to give everyone a special hat to wear during the meeting. He found that if they could all laugh together, they could work together. We will be sharing memories of **Don** during a church service in the near future. He had a long-time commitment to Huston-Tillotson University and served on the board and as chair there for a number of years. You may send memorial donations to <https://htu.edu/ram-annual-fund>.

Faye Dierksen says, "We did make it to Oswego, NY! The whole family is here and getting slightly settled in. Our Expedition broke down while **Andy** was on his way to the airport to pick us up so we have spent the first few days being here looking at and buying a new car. It wouldn't be an **Andy** and **Faye** adventure if something like that hadn't happened. **Deek**, **Astrid** and I had a lovely time in

Florida from May 12 - May 28. **Deek** made friends with everyone at the nightly sunset watching gathering. My cousin **Mariah** flew from Austin to Florida on May 25 to help me with the kids on the flight to New York and is luckily staying with us until Friday June 3rd. She is worth her weight in gold as far as helping with the kids goes. **Deek** immediately fell madly in love with her, of course! We were sad to leave my mom when it was time to head to NY as we got very used to being with her and having her around, but **Deek** has been sure to Facetime her many times since we parted ways. The farm house is exactly what I hoped it would be. It needs work but it's a lovely little home, on a lovely little bit of land, perfect for our little family!" She also shares, "We will see you at church on Sunday.



5/8/22 Faye Dierksen holding Astrid in the family heirloom christening dress



5/15/22 Beautiful Florida sunset with Faye holding Astrid, and her mom Cameon Wefso holding Deek

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



5/28/22 Deek and Andy Dierksen on the stairs of their new home in Oswego, NY

and the Roman baths in Bath. Finally, we spent three more days in London. Two highlights in London were visiting the Churchill War Museum and seeing the musical “Wicked.” We also took a boat tour down the Thames. Preparations for the Queen's 70th jubilee were seen throughout London. This is only an overview. Our trip was packed full every day. We saw lots of castles and cathedrals, and numerous picturesque little towns. It was a great trip, full of amazing adventures.”



5/22 Pam Tucker with 13th century Conwy Castle in the background

Pam Tucker reports, "A friend of mine from grad school, **Marcia**, and I made a trip to the UK for vacation. I had never been to the UK. We started in London, then went on a small group tour from London, through Wales and up to Edinburgh. We visited Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare's birthplace), Shropshire to see the first iron bridge ever constructed. We stayed in Shrewsbury where we were able to watch the manual locks used between the canals and rivers for the canal boats. Fascinating! We saw Conwy Castle, Snowdonia National Park. We got a great tour and demonstration of slate tile making at the National Slate Museum in Caernarfon. We stayed in York and visited the walled city of (York founded by the Romans) and York Minster. We walked a section of Hadrian's Wall including Sycamore Gap. We spent several days in Edinburgh exploring the city. We stayed in Keswick in the beautiful Lake District for a couple of days. On our drive we saw the long haired Highland Cows (pronounced heelan coos) and the Belted Galloway cows which look like oreo cookies. We also went to the Highlands and to St. Andrew's and saw the University of St. Andrew's where Prince **William** met **Kate**, and the famous golf course where the 150th British Open will be held in July. We visited 3 stone circles including Stonehenge



5/22 Pam Tucker and her friend Marcia with amazing statues called The Kelpies—just outside of Edinburgh, Scotland, in Falkirk

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes



5/22 Pam Tucker at Stonehenge

The term “mold remediation” is not likely to inspire excitement for a church project but on November 5, 2021, initial mold testing was done in the education wing by MIT (Mold Inspection & Testing). Trustee Lynn Chavarria passed the coordination of the project to office administrator **Donna Cravens** at the end of April 2022. She met the workers, coordinated their times, and walked them up and down the stairs many times! On May 6th, a pod was delivered to the church to put stuff in. The first few days of May, **Amy Harris** boxed up the music/hymnals, etc., into archive boxes and **Jaime Hadley** emptied file cabinets and consolidated the trash from the choir room so the ‘Got Junk’ guys could haul it away. **Whit Bodman**, as well as **Marc Patel’s** three guys (paid separately) along with **Matt** (Street Youth Ministries) unloaded the cleanable contents from the Choir Room, Sunday School rooms and closets as well as the entire 3rd floor. One huge job was breaking down an old, heavy, moldy piano into smaller pieces. Setting aside bagged up trash for removal by the ‘Got Junk’ guys on Monday 5/9/22, and loading the items kept by Street Youth Ministry into the U-Haul truck where **Terry** moved it to a storage locker he rented, and finally our contents were moved to the Pod in the parking lot next door. Green Star Eco started the mold remediation 5/11/22 and finished up on 5/14/22. **Marc Patel**, the territory manager for Green Star Eco Services, cleaned and moved the electronics from the Sunday School Room to the library. Final mold retesting was done on May 17th and the results came back negative so we’re good to get

the next part done, which is painting and replacing the missing ceiling tiles. Further updates will be forthcoming.

It was wonderful to see our former cellist **Tony Rogers** on a segment of the local CBS 10 pm. news on Friday evening, May 27th. **Tony** noted that when the pandemic came more than two years ago, that for professional musicians, their options for teaching, rehearsing, and performing mostly disappeared. In March of 2000, **Tony** decided on a “quick project” for his already existing Austin Cello Choir (which rehearsed at the church). He arranged a variety of music and had players send in video tapes. The first Covid Cello Project had 17 cellists—most of them from the already existing cello choir. **Tony** then sent out a query through the International Cello Society. By the time they got to their 9th video, there were 200 cellists from all over the world. **Tony** has worked hard on using the technology to make it all work. The Covid Cello Project uses a “clap track” to get everyone’s video lined up with everyone else’s. There are more than 600 players in the most recent performances. **Tony** says that one of the most moving performances was **Samuel Barber’s** Adagio for Strings during which performers posted pictures of those who had died from Covid.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ly61HpQ3mU>)

Here is another link—enjoy!!

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-8ol45TBt8>)

Kyle Riley, our Director of Online Ministries, moved to Houston in May. **Kyle’s** longtime girlfriend, **Scout**, finished her Master’s degree at Texas A&M and received a fantastic offer for a government relations position in the Houston area. May 22nd was his last service onsite (though he plans to return in August to preach one Sunday). Though **Kyle** is sad to no longer be physically at CCA, the move is a great opportunity for their family.

Frances Holliday Alford delighted in-person congregants on Sunday, May 22, by creating a pop-up quilt exhibit in the fellowship room. She brought a number of her works for everyone to enjoy. **Frances**, a long-time member of the church and a nationally known textile artist, is creating a quilt/wall hanging which will replace the lost tapestry which disappeared during the pandemic.

photo on the next page

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes



5/22/15 Seeing Fran and Rambie Briggs in person after nearly 3 years--visiting with Dave Ross and Frances Alford and her pop-up quilt exhibit

Tess Howicz is spending the summer at the University of Missouri to obtain her Missouri residency for in-state tuition. She received an internship with the Missouri United Methodist Church, working with the Director of Communications. Her job will include taking photos of events, helping with MUMC's website and newsletter, as well as assisting with their Sunday School and Youth Group. Special thanks to **Liz Nash**, who provided reference support for **Tess's** application! **Tess** became connected with the church by attending the church's college youth group, known as The Neighborhood (a/k/a Crew), an open and affirming ministry that "seeks to question everything, love God and love neighbor" and to "help you make your faith your own." **Tess** is also working for the University in her spare time, providing tours of Mizzou's School of Journalism for prospective students and their families.

Joan Mueller sends this impassioned plea after the massacre in Uvalde. "I beg you all to write to the Austin American-Statesman and tell them we absolutely must elect candidates that stand for gun control. Do you have children, grandchildren or just love children being able to learn and play and grow to adulthood? FIGHT! Let's do what we can. PLEASE!"

Don Miles' book, **Cinco de Mayo: What is Everybody Celebrating? (2nd Ed.)** has just won another award. This time it's the Communicator award for excellence in strategic, effective and meaningful communication. He had a great trip with several family members joining him in Mexico in May.



5/22 CLIFFS OF ACULTZINGO - Don Miles sharing that in 1862 the Mexicans were up here firing down at the invading French army. In 2022, this is a windmill farm with at least a dozen windmills lined up along the ridge.



5/22 Richard Miles with an alligator in Tlacotalpan

Warinda Harris celebrated a milestone birthday on May 2nd and her family and friends threw her an amazing 50th birthday party in Houston on May 7th. There were more than a hundred folks there—friends from her high school days, lots of Houston family, and other family who came in from Lafayette, LA. Her best friend from 3rd grade (who also lives here in Austin now) was there—as were **Warinda's** husband **John**, sons **Alden** and **Will**, and mom **Barbara Johnson**. She even was given a make-

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

over—some of which she liked and some of which she didn't. She was not happy with the false eye lashes, for example, but she loved seeing so many folks from her life. Son **Will Harris** graduated from Lively Middle School on May 28th and is really looking forward to going to Austin High in the fall. If **Warinda** hadn't gotten Covid just days after **Will's** graduation, there might have been pictures of the two events, but the energy level was not good. The whole family is fully vaxxed and boosted. **Will** tested positive but was asymptomatic. **Warinda**, a huge tennis fan (thanks to her dad) was very unhappy that she felt so sick that she was falling asleep during the French Open.

Caleb Jack Parkhill graduated 8th grade from Wayside Sci-Tech charter middle school. He plans on attending Akins High School this fall. He graduated with A-B honors, and was a member of the basketball team.



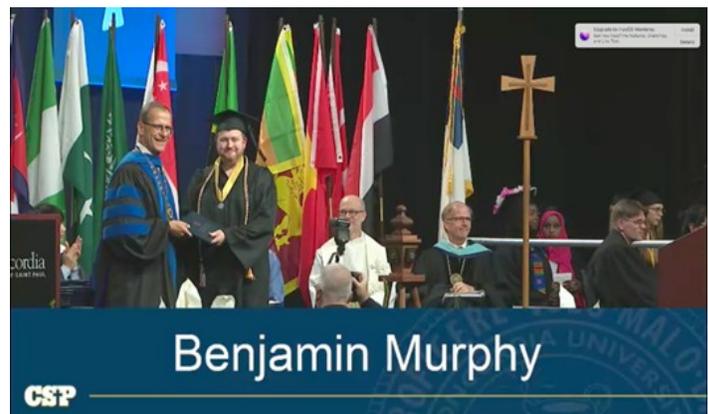
5/24/22 Caleb Parkhill graduated from Wayside-Tech middle-school.

Dennis Murphy had really hoped to be in St. Paul, MN, for son **Ned's** graduation on May 6th from Concordia University St. Paul, but what with delays in flights for his trip which was supposed to be only 24 hours anyway, the fact that his daughter-in-law **Faye**, a critical care nurse, was scheduled to work that weekend and that there would be very little time to see their grandchildren (**James**, 6, and **Adalyn**, 3), **Dennis** and **Nodie** ended up watching the online

streaming of the graduation at home in Round Rock. Regardless of whether they were there in person or not, they were beaming with pride when **Ned** graduated summa cum laude with a degree in biology. **Ned** would like to go to grad school, but realizes that he will need to get a part-time job this coming year as **Ned** also helps with childcare. He has made good academic connections at Concordia, so he hopes that will help when he is ready to go to grad school. **Ned** and **Faye** have had very little time to sleep in the past few years, as they have both been very busy with work and school and children!



5/6/22 Concordia University St. Paul slide showing the playhouse that Ned Murphy built his children--Adalyn and James--note summa cum laude!!!



5/6/22 Photo of Ned Murphy that Dennis took as he and Nodie watched the graduation in Austin

Many of you have followed the exploits and ups and downs (literally) of **Joy Penticuff** as she pursues her passion for riding horses. You may recall that her 21-year-old horse Armani (that's 63 in human years) began to have arthritis last year and this caused him discomfort when he jumped. **Joy's** discipline is English Hunter so she needs a horse who enjoys jump

Personals (cont) by Pat Oakes

-ing. So, after consulting with several veterinarians, **Joy** decided it was time for Armani to retire. Luckily, **Joy's Aunt May** inherited the family farm and was willing for Armani to retire there. It's a lovely 100-acre farm with three other horses, one mule, three donkeys, and numerous other four-legged animals who live in a peaceful paradise. **Joy** put Armani on the Equine Express horse van on Tuesday April 26th, then **Joy** and her trainer **Janet** flew to Kansas City on Wednesday morning, April 27th and **Joy** rode the new

“candidate” horse Wednesday afternoon while **Janet** watched. **Joy** made an offer for the horse which the owner accepted. Then the next morning **Janet** flew back to Austin and **Joy** flew to Charleston, S.C., then was driven to the farm in Manning and was at the farm in time to greet Armani as he came off the transport van on Friday the 29th. Now Armani is happily settled in at the farm and **Joy** has a new ten-year-old thoroughbred, Dante. He is still in Kansas but will be picked up on June 4th and transported to Austin.



Joy and Armani in 2017



Lillian (the owner), Joy (the buyer), and Dante in his stall in Kansas—a really sweet horse who's stepping into Armani's shoes (so to speak)



Armani getting off the transport van at the family farm on May 29th with Joy there to welcome him—look at the size of the van! He was in a 12' x 12' box stall for the trip! He's saying, "Where the heck are we?"

Marilyn Gaddis and her daughter-in-law **Sandra Carruthers** flew to California April 28th to attend **Marilyn's** 72nd Pomona College reunion in Claremont. The actual 1950 Class Reunion in 2020 was cancelled! They were “wined and dined” royally for four days. One highlight of the reunion was the "Parade of Classes" down several city blocks and through the college gates. The college mascot, Cecil Sagehen, led the way, followed by the oldest classes with townspeople, students, and the other classes cheering. Before the reunion

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

events started, **Sandra** wanted to see the houses where Marilyn and her late husband had lived. At the first house, purchased in 1953, they met an elderly gentleman coming out the back gate. He turned out to be the man who had bought the house in 1957 from **Marilyn** and her husband. He remembered visiting **Marilyn** in her new house! The viewing of four other homes was not so memorable! Sunday afternoon, after the college reunion, **Marilyn's** family living in the area gathered for a mini reunion and dinner.



4/30/22 Marilyn Gaddis at her Pomona College reunion with "Cecil Sagehen," Pomona College Mascot

Congratulations to **Megan Goff** who graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio. Her plans include getting a part-time job while building her portfolio and applying for illustrator positions. **Megan's** high school friend **Nikki** came to Chicago for graduation with her boyfriend and then they rented an SUV to help with her move back to Austin. **John** and **Gail** also attended the ceremony. Other members of the family (**Cameron** and his fiancée **Amber**, Grandpa **Dick** and his wife **Dagmar**) came earlier in the month for the undergraduate exhibition.



5/23/22 Megan Goff, her cat Kewpie, and her mom Gail Christeson on their road trip home after Megan's graduation from the Art Institute of Chicago



5/22/22 The amazing Megan Goff at graduation from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Barbara Burnham shares, "As many know by now, I have gone back to work, this time for the IRS. I had been looking forward to it, particularly because I had had to jump through so many hoops to get the job! The first week was extremely difficult, not because of the work, but because of the lack of accommodation for my mobility issues. There was

Personals (cont)
by Pat Oakes

really only one supervisor who was helpful--she herself had had knee and hip replacements and understood what I needed. I do have access to handicapped parking, but I have to arrive about 45 minutes before my shift starts to get a space. I have taken to eating a portable breakfast in the car and listening to the news on NPR rather than reviewing the newspapers. This second week is much better. I haven't had to walk all over our large building but have, and will have for the next 3 weeks, a consistent placement near restrooms and a nice outdoor patio for lunch. (There is a cafeteria, but I can't walk that far.) The work so far is not particularly difficult but does involve some training. For a few days we processed transmittals from employers whose employees were covered by the Affordable Care Act. Today, Thursday (June 2), we started training on the system that we will use to process paper returns of individual taxpayers. My coworkers are a wonderful, multicultural group and so far are the highlight of my experience. In three weeks, I will move to the other side of the building, but I think it will work out there, too. It is a good feeling to know that I'm helping with the backlog and within a few weeks will be able to help taxpayers get their long awaited refunds! Oh, and I joined the union! Never been a union member before!"

Whit Bodman shares, "**Betty** and I went to New Jersey, supposedly to see "Hamilton," but COVID raised its ugly face and we could not go. We spent time exploring new restaurants and poking around in our apartment-to-be. Later, I went to Washington, D.C. for a meeting of the National Council of Churches Jewish-Christian dialogue. It was about 20 people. Most of us have been meeting together for years. We know and love each other. This time we had a moderated conversation that ended up being about how we can talk about difficult topics. That means Israel. We all represent organizations, so we wear two hats. One is our small group, knowing and caring about each other. The other hat is representing our organizations. I represent the UCC, which approved a resolution at Synod that is highly critical of Israel. Rabbi Noam Morans, representing the American Jewish Committee wrote a sharp rebuke of the resolution. Personally, sitting together, we can say things that we cannot say as

representatives. So which hat am I wearing when? Which is he wearing? It was a very positive experience, charting a way forward. Now I am home, back in the workshop."

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes

Go to this Web site to learn more about Don Brown--
<https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/MensBookClub/DonaldWBrown.html>



11/11/07 Don Brown with Bill and Betty Phillips after church



1/19/09 Don Brown helping with church repairs

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



3/6/09 Don Brown hard at work on repairing the side door to the church



3/4/12 Don Brown, Dick Jackson and Mary Sinclair visiting from Canada, Mel Oakes, Lynne Lemley

History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes, cont.



2/16/15 Don Brown with Joe McMillan and birthday queen Nancy Brown at her 95th birthday celebration at Green Pastures



2-16-18 Don and Sharon Brown --at Nancy Brown's 98th birthday luncheon at Pappadeaux's