

# THE VISITOR

October 2025

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

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**Ginny Brown Daniel, Interim Pastor**

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What a fall it's been so far. I attended my seminary's reunion. There's something about stepping foot on the sacred ground that formed me that renewed my spirit in these challenging times. Below are some of my classmates as well as the library of Union Presbyterian Seminary, where I worked during seminary.



Below are some recent books and podcasts I've been listening to that I wanted to share with you this fall!  
Enjoy!  
Blessings, Ginny

## **Books:**

Strong Ground, Brene Brown  
Civil Rights Queen: The Story of Constance Baker Motley, Tomiko Brown-Nagin  
The Garner Files, James Garner

## **Podcasts:**

[IMO \(In My Opinion\), Michelle Obama and her brother Craig Robinson](#)  
[The Best People, Nicole Wallace \(from MSNBC\)](#)  
[Good Hang with Amy Pohler](#)  
[Letters from an American, Heather Cox Richardson](#)  
[The Nonviolent Jesus, Father John Dear](#)

## November Visitor Deadline October 24,2025

### 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	Open

**Personals  
by Pat Oakes**

**Reuel Nash** reports news that seems unbelievable for those of us in Austin, but he says, "Just starting to get Fall color in the Berkshires." A picture is worth a thousand words!



The Nashes are enjoying early fall color at their place in the Berkshires

**Charlie Bernacchio** and **Catherine Hannon** share from Maine. "We miss you all! Our fall plans include a trip to Ireland for the first two weeks of October. Looking forward to the incredible fall foliage here before we leave. It's cooler now as fall should be in the northeast and perhaps the end of summer will arrive soon in Austin. We expect to return to see you again during the Christmas holidays which will be special!" Have a great trip and we look forward to seeing you in December.

**Roberto Hernandez—Geer** shares from Apodaca, Nuevo Leon, Mexico (near Monterrey), "Sebastian's third birthday was on Friday, September 12th, so here are some photos of this celebration and also some others from school. We all gathered together in my brother's house to celebrate Sebastian's special day." They are certainly growing fast!!!



9/2025 Xitlali and Sebastian Hernandez-Geer ready for a rodeo!



9/25 Sebastian and Xitlali all ready for their first day of school



9/12/25 Sebastian really is 3!

Photos cont. on the next page

## Personals (cont.) by Pat Oakes



9/12/25 Sebastian celebrating his 3rd birthday with lots of family



9/12/25 Xitlali whacking a Mickey Mouse piñata on Sebastian's 3rd birthday

**Sarah Darter** is delighted to report, "Hi, All! The owner and CEO of Silverleaf Eldercare facilities is opening two more facilities in Bee Cave. He asked if I was willing to be the activity director, the chaplain and do some palliative massage. The original plan was to have me be chaplain and work for halftime but with the opening of these facilities on October 9th, they will need an immediate activities director full-time. So my offer from him is to do all three (activities, chaplaincy, and palliative massage.) Palliative massage does not require a table. It's spending minutes doing massage on hands, head, feet and shoulders. He did request that I work full days, Saturdays, and Sundays and then take off two other days during the week. This sadly means I will be missing our church on Sunday but working towards offering worship there. I want to combine music and arts, drumming, making noise, as in "make a joyful noise unto the Lord," maybe waving banners in an active and joyful worship setting. In time I will

incorporate InterPlay techniques and voice/sound work in the worship. Originally, I wasn't crazy about the activities part, but within a day I realized I love doing crafts, being with people, establishing a rapport, finding out about them, and them finding out about me. So the activities will feed into my effectiveness as a chaplain. I'm right now trying to think of what worship could look like in an Eldercare facility where several of the people have varying degrees of dementia. I have found books on Thrift-books dealing with worshipping with dementia, helping families who have a loved one with dementia and so forth. If you know any people doing this ministry or have any idea ideas, please speak up! I did propose a monthly support group for family members and friends whose loved one has dementia. It will concentrate on the family members of those in our facilities, and also open it to the public. I think people talking and sharing and my adding some helpful information will be the heart of the group. I am really, really excited about this ministry. The owner is Parker Patterson. He said he grew up with his parents having a mission of encouraging families to adopt children with physical and mental needs. He said he had one blood sibling and then the nine other siblings were children his parents had adopted. They are all alive, including four with Down syndrome. Others had multiple health and mental issues. He said he grew up taking care of people older than him and younger than him. He has never been around chaplains and is now thrilled with the prospect of having the spiritual needs of his residents addressed by a professional chaplain. I thank you for your prayers and your support. I do think this ministry is the result of a Long Job Search, and Lots Of Prayer." You will certainly be missed at church on Sundays, Sarah!

In late August, **Bill Campbell** and **Victoria Li** hosted **Faye Dierksen** and children, **Deek** and **Astrid**, and **Faye's** friend **Nick**, while at their house near Sandy Creek, New York. Sandy Creek is not far from where **Faye** and family live in Oswego NY. It was a wonderful morning. **Faye** and the kids are doing great. **Bill** especially enjoyed taking them to his family's stretch of Little Sandy Creek and looking for minnows and crayfish with the kids where **Bill** looked for such creatures when he was their age. The property is a 10 acre piece of what was **Bill's** grandparents dairy farm and has been in the family since the late 1800's.

Photos cont. on next page

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



8/25 Deek and Astrid Dierksen visiting Bill Campbell and Victoria Li in Sandy Creek, NY, with mom Faye and her friend Nick



8/25 Faye Dierksen with Deek and Astrid and friend Nick



8/25 Bill and Astrid enjoying an adventure in Little Sandy Creek



8/25 Victoria and Bill with Faye and Nick, Deek, and Astrid



8/25 Bill and Deek checking out minnow possibilities in Little Sandy Creek

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

**Joy Penticuff** was doing well when we called her to talk about the wonderful 150 million dollar Moody Foundation gift to Huston-Tillotson University several weeks ago! In years past **Joy**, has worked closely with Huston-Tillotson folks and has gotten to know many of the faculty. The day we called, she was in Boerne cleaning out the old camper that she and her husband **Michael** have had for years. They are looking forward to taking some short trips in the upcoming months. She enjoyed several trips to South Carolina to visit with her sisters and her Aunt **Mae** over the summer.

**Stephen Russell** posted on Facebook, "It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of our beloved mother, **Betsy Russell**. We are grateful to have spent the weekend with her and our dad (**Rollin**), offering love and comfort in her final days. **Stephen** shares, **ELIZABETH "BETSY" HOWARD RUSSELL** October 11, 1940 - September 21, 2025 **Elizabeth (Betsy) Howard Russell**, 84, of Asheville, NC, passed away peacefully at home after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. She is survived by her husband, Rev. Dr. **Rollin O. Russell**; her children **Bethany Baker (Joseph)**, **Amy Russell (Michael Finch)**, **Stephen Russell (Scott Neeley)**, and **Joseph Hilliard (Lucy)**; and five grandchildren. Born in Mobile, AL, **Betsy** graduated magna cum laude from Vanderbilt University and later earned a master's in French from TCU. She taught English and French at high schools in Texas and North Carolina and served as a professor at Elon University. A dedicated advocate, she was active in political and community service, including working on **Jimmy Carter's** campaign and helping found the Women's Resource Center in Burlington, NC. Those who knew her best are thankful for her kindness, compassion, and hospitality, her excellence in teaching, and her fierce commitment to integrity, equality, and justice. A memorial service will be held on her 85th birthday, Saturday, Oct. 11, at 1:30 RS PT p.m. at First Congregational UCC in Asheville. Donations in her memory may be made to the Women's Resource Center of Alamance County or First Congregational UCC of Asheville. In lieu of flowers or gifts, we ask that donations be made in memory of **Betsy Russell** to the Women's Re-source Center in Alamance County (<https://wrcac.org/>) or to First Congregational United Church of Christ of Asheville (<https://uccasheville.org>). Morris Funeral Home, 304 Merrimon Ave., Asheville, is honored to be caring for **Betsy's** family. Condolences may be sent to the family through the website, [www.MorrisFamilyCare.com](http://www.MorrisFamilyCare.com).



4/1/01 Betsy Russell on the church's centennial Sunday

Keep **Betty Phillips** in your prayers. She has been having a tough time health-wise since August—including kidney stones and a fall. She spent some time in the Kyle Seton Hospital not very far from where she and her daughter **Katy** live. Daughter **Stephanie** has also been visiting often to help **Katy** with all that is going on. **Betty** is at home now and slowly improving.

The **Oakes** family had much to celebrate this month. After more than four years struggling with what she was told was Parkinson's, **Pat** got the results of a new test that concluded with 96% accuracy that she does not have Parkinson's or Parkinson's like neurological conditions. Despite being diagnosed by three different neurologists (Parkinson's is hard to diagnose), there were always alternate explanations related to her back surgeries in 2016 for her symptoms. **Mel** discovered information about a new test for Parkinson's about a year ago. It required time to find a neurologist who would perform the test and some time to convince him that it was needed. Needless to say, we are delighted with the results and now **Pat** is working to withdraw from the drug she has been taking since receiving the diagnosis nearly five years ago. There is little guidance available that applies in her case. We are optimistic that once she is free of the drug, she will feel better and she can work with physical therapy to address her balance issues.

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

This just in from **Carolyn Thompson**, "Here is a great description from the Amazon website of **Frances Alford's** new book, out just in time for the big International Quilt Festival in Houston, October 9th -12th — "**A Life in Quilts: 80-Year Retrospective.**" She will have some quilts on display in the show in Houston if you are in the neighborhood. She created our wonderful new altar hanging. The book is available in paperback for \$14.95. I'll order a copy for CCA to keep with information about the panel she made for our sanctuary."



Congratulations to **Danny and Mary (Towery) Masters**. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a party on September 25, 2025, with family and friends in Taylor, TX.

# History Corner by Pat & Mel Oakes

As we move forward on decisions related to the church building, we thought a look back to its dedication in 1923 would be of interest. There were two newspapers that covered the occasion: The Austin Statesman and The Daily Texan. The Statesman had two articles, a week apart, leading up to the event and the Texan had one. The articles are now on the history web site and can be read here:

<https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/CAHistory/ChurchDedication1923.html>

Here we include the page from the Sunday, December 2, 1923 The Austin Statesman.

PAGE TWELVE

**THE AUSTIN STATESMAN**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1923

## News of the Churches

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Tenth and Colorado. George Green, pastor. Sunday school at 9:30 a. m. Graded classes for all ages. E. J. Matthews, superintendent. The pastor, Dr. George Green will preach both morning and evening. Subject of the morning service will be "The Joy of Church Membership." Subject of the evening service beginning promptly at 7:30 will be "The Discipulations of Unrighteousness." The B. Y. P. U.'s meet in their rooms just an hour before the regular preaching service. Come early and visit them. Midweek prayer and praise service Wednesday evening beginning at 7:30. The Sunday School Teacher Training class will meet at 6:30 Wednesday evening supper will be served by a group of young ladies from Mrs. I. E. Baker's class. Immediately after supper, classes meet and finish the study in time for the regular Prayer Meeting service. A cordial welcome is extended to all out-of-town visitors to worship with us while in the city.

**UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Corner Twenty-second and Guadalupe. Rev. A. L. Aulick, pastor. Bible school, devotional opening at 9:45 a. m.; Dr. W. M. W. Spaw, superintendent. Organized classes for all ages. Special courses offered University students. Morning service 11 a. m. Subject of sermon, "Church Life of the Student." Evening service, at 7:30 p. m., subject, "A Tragedy in a Young Man's Life." Mission Sunday School at State Street Mission at 3 p. m. Junior B. Y. P. U. meets at the church at 7:30 p. m. All other B. Y. P. U. sections meet at 8:30 p. m. Midweek prayer meeting Wednesday 7:30 p. m. for one hour only. Hearty welcome to strangers at all these services.

**EAST AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Corner of East Avenue and First Street. H. C. Morrison, pastor. Anniversary Week, Dec. 2 to 5. East Avenue Church was organized for membership of second street Baptist Church on Dec. 6, 1898 and is now fifteen years old. The church will observe this anniversary week with an offering for the church building fund.

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH**  
Tenth and Bracon. On Sunday morning, Nov. 4, there will be low mass at 7:30 and high mass at 10. At the low mass Father Burns will give a short instruction on "The Arm of Light." The sermon for high mass will be preached by Father Quinn on "Thoughts for Advent." The subject for the evening discourse will be "The Veneration of Relics." On Saturday, Dec. 8, a holiday of obligation, there will be low mass at 7 and high mass at 9.

**FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST**  
Driskill Hotel, pink room, mezzanine floor. Service every Sunday at 11 a. m. Sunday School at 12:30. Wednesday evening testimonial meeting at 8 o'clock. The reading room, 514 Littlefield building is open daily except Sunday and legal holidays from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m. The Bible and authorized literature on Christian Science may be read, borrowed or purchased there. You are cordially invited to visit the reading room and attend the services.

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY**  
1054 West Ninth Street. Services Sunday, 11 a. m. and 3 p. m. Sunday School 9:30 a. m. Wednesday evening testimonial meeting at 8 o'clock. Reading room, same address, open from 3 to 5 Tuesday and Friday. You are kindly invited to attend these services and make use of the reading room.

**HYDE PARK CHRISTIAN**  
Forty-second and Avenue D. J. A. Choermtt, pastor. Phone 6213. Bible school, 9:45. Preaching, 11. Subject, "Furible of the Sower." Senior Christian Endeavor at 4:45. Intermediate Christian Endeavor at 4:30. Junior Christian Endeavor Tuesday at 4 p. m. Prayer meeting Wednesday at 7:30. Preaching at 7:45. Subject, "Women's Missionary Program." Midweek prayer meeting Wednesday.

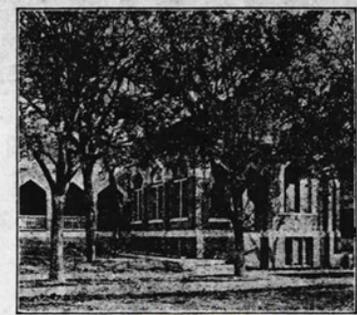
**ALL SAINTS' CHAPEL**  
The University Episcopal Church. White Avenue and Twenty-second street. Frederick J. Bate, rector. First Sunday in Advent. Holy Communion at 7:30 a. m. The Church School with University and adult Bible classes at 9:30 a. m. Dr. W. J. Batts, superintendent. Holy Communion and sermon at 11 a. m. Subject, "The Adventure of Religion." "The Adventure of Activity." Vesper service at 5 p. m. Student Sunday Club at 4:45 p. m. Parish group meeting at 7:30 p. m. for study of the church's program.

**ST. DAVID'S (EPISCOPAL) CHURCH**  
Corner Seventh and San Jacinto streets. Services this Sunday at 7:30 and 11 a. m. The public is cordially invited to worship with us. Church School at 9:30 a. m. Mr. W. C. Franklin, superintendent. Bible classes for adults, Hon. W. C. Morrey, leader. Young People's Service League at 3 p. m. Rev. J. B. Whaling is temporarily in charge of this parish. His services are available at all times. Office 304 East Seventh Street, phone 9684. Residence 497 West Twenty-fifth and a half street. Phone 3129.

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN**  
East Sixteenth and Red River. E. G. Mann, pastor. E. F. Wilkening, organist. Services in German at 10:30 a. m. Subject, "Daughter of Zion, Blessed Thy King Cometh Unto Thee." Sunday School and Bible classes at 2:30 a. m. Services at 7:30 p. m. Subject, "Come Unto Me." Junior League at 3 p. m. Weather League Thursday at 8 p. m. at Luther Center, 497 West Twenty-third Street. Ladies Aid Wednesday at 3 p. m. You are cordially invited to these services.

**ST. MARTIN'S EVANGELICAL-LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
166 East Thirtieth street. Sunday School at 9 a. m. Bible Class at 10:30 a. m. Luther League 10 a. m. Ladies Aid will meet Wednesday.

**New First Congregational Church To Be Dedicated Next Sunday**



**THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING.**

Dedication of the First Congregational Church building now nearing completion at San Antonio and West Twenty-third streets will take place in a special dedication service Sunday morning, Dec. 9, at 9:45. It was announced Saturday by Rev. Alphon O. Stevens, pastor of the church. There will also be an afternoon and a night service on the same day in observance of the church's dedication. Rev. Mr. Stevens will give a historical statement of the new church building movement at the dedication service and the sermon will be delivered by Rev. Robert W. Gammon, D. D., of Chicago, secretary of the Congregational Educational Society. The music for the service will be in charge of Miss Sara Hansauer assisted by a chorus choir and orchestra at the morning service and by a chorus choir and violin soloists in the evening. The dedication hymn written by Rev. Mr. Stevens will be a feature of the morning service. A vesper service will be held in the afternoon at 4 o'clock at which time the communion service will also be held. New members will be received at this time and a large class is to be admitted, according to Rev. Mr. Stevens. The evening service to be held at the communion service will also be held. The financial campaign for the new building was directed by Rev. Mr. Stevens and the total amount was subscribed before the building was begun.

**SWEDISH METHODIST TO CELEBRATE ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY WEDNESDAY**

The Swedish Central Methodist Episcopal Church of Austin, located at the corner of Thirtieth and Colorado streets, will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary Wednesday night, Dec. 5, at 7 o'clock in the church auditorium. The fiftieth anniversary celebrations will be held in connection with the Southern Swedish Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which convenes Friday morning, Dec. 7, at 9 o'clock. Bishop Ernest Lynn Walker, D. D., LL. D., will preside at the conference sessions. The Swedish Central Methodist Episcopal Church of Austin will be held in the church auditorium, and the public is cordially invited to attend the ceremonies. The congregation of the Swedish Central Methodist Episcopal Church now numbers 260 members, having grown from a church of about a dozen charter members to the present congregation in the past fifty years. The following is the program of the Southern Swedish Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which will convene Friday morning, Dec. 7, at 9 o'clock. Bishop Ernest Lynn Walker will preside at the conference sessions. Thursday, 10 a. m., examinations; 3 p. m. preparatory work; 3 p. m. concert. Friday, 9 a. m., opening of conference; with communion service led by the bishop; 3 p. m., anniversary of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society; address by Miss Jennie C. Walker, returned missionary from Wuhu, China; 8 p. m. service, address by Bishop Walker, "To Serve the Present Age." Saturday, 9 a. m., conference session; address by Dr. R. J. Wade, corresponding secretary of committee of conservation and advance, "Our World Service Program"; address by Dr. H. E. Smith, of the board of Sunday Schools, "Strengthening the Local Church with a Trained Leadership"; address by Dr. P. W. Miller of the board of home missions, "Saving America Through Our New Home Missions"; 3 p. m. service, address by Dr. T. H. Lowe, corresponding secretary of the board of foreign missions, "Our Overseas Work"; address by Dr. R. J. Wade, "A United Church in World Service." Sunday, 9:30 a. m., conference. Thanksgiving service, 10:30 a. m., sermon by Bishop Walker, 1:30 p. m., missionary sermon (Swedish) by Rev. John J. Hamilton; 4:30 p. m., Epworth League service, address by Miss Jennie C. Walker of Kuba, China; 7:30 p. m. service, address by Dr. Raymond V. Johnson, field secretary of the board of temperance, 9:30 p. m., service, address by Rev. Mr. Stevens, "The Church's Program for the Future." The following pastors have served the church since its organization, fifty years ago: Rev. C. Charquist, Rev. V. Whiting, Rev. P. A. Juhn, Rev. F. L. Carlander, Rev. A. J. Gustafson, Rev. Nels Ekland, Dr. O. E. Glander, and Rev. R. Howe. The present pastor is Rev. E. Norberg, who has served the church since July 1919. Of the former pastors of the church only three are now living. These include Rev. P. A. Juhn, Rev. F. L. Carlander and Dr. O. E. Glander. Dr. Glander is now president of the Texas Wesleyan College, a Swedish college of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Swedish Central Methodist Episcopal Church was the first Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church organized in Texas and is the Mother Church in Texas. The congregation first worshipped in a small frame church at Fifteenth and Red River Streets. In 1899 the present church was purchased from the board of church extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The church was remodeled at considerable cost after it was purchased from the conference, and is now the most substantial and beautiful in the Southern Swedish Conference. The congregation has just bought a new pipe organ, which the Henry Fisher & Sons organ builders, have installed in the last few weeks. The organ was installed by the company's state representative, Edward C. Haury. The pipe organ cost \$4,500 and is one of the finest in Austin. Thursday night, Dec. 6, at 8 o'clock, pipe organ concert will be given by Miss Elna

8