

February 2017

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

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The South Central Conference Confirmation Camp is February 3-5th at Slumber Falls Camp. Rev. Daniel Haas from St. John's UCC in Rosenberg will lead the camp with assistance from Rev. David Pantermuehl and Rev. Jeremy Albers. The camp will be based on a book **"Americas Four Gods: What We Say About God - and What That Says About Us"** by Froese & Bader. I had not heard of this book so I've ordered a copy for myself and I looked up some reviews of the book.



It sounds fascinating. It is no surprise that even today 90% or more of Americans believe in God. It also is no surprise that there are a variety of interpretation of what Americans believe God to be. The authors asked two questions in an extensive, nationwide survey of people across the full spectrum of life.

1. **"To what extent does God interact with the world?"**

2. **"To what extent does God judge the world?"**

It is the author's contentions that **"The answers to these questions predict the substance of our worldviews much better than the color of our skin, the size of our bank account, the political party we belong to, or whether we wear a white Stetson or faded Birkenstocks."**

Once they had the answers to these questions they concluded that Americans have 4 basic views of God:

1. **The Authoritative God, who both judges and is closely engaged in the world.**
2. **The Benevolent God, who is 'engaged but nonjudgmental'.**
3. **The Critical God, who is judgmental but disengaged.**
4. **The Distant God who is neither engaged or judgmental and who could care less about us.**

Lent starts on March 1st, only a month away. How would you answer the two questions? Which of the four descriptions of God most closely resembles your view of God?

I am really looking forward to the confirmation camp and reading this book. Don't be surprised I find a way to work it into some sermons, maybe during Lent or the lead up to Lent.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Scott

Heart of Texas Association News

Our Heart of Texas Association Spring Meeting date, time, and meeting place has been set. We will be gathering on Sunday, April 23rd at Faith United Church in New Braunfels. Registration begins at 3:00 pm, the meeting begins at 3:30 pm, and we will end with dinner. On the agenda so far is a program, a business meeting, and (most important) worship and fellowship together. As always, we will end with dinner. We are very aware of the driving distances for some in our churches, so we will be trying to end in time to keep at least most of us from driving in the dark. All from our churches are welcome and encouraged to join us.

Ernie Dean is our former Brazos Association Minister, former pastor and interim pastor at several of our churches, former leader of our Licensed Ministry training, and friend to many of us. He and Shirley, his wife, are moving from their home of many years in Austin to Westminster, a senior living center in central Austin. **Their address, as of the week of January 22nd, is 4100 Jackson Ave, Apt. 406, Austin, TX 78731.**

Their phone numbers, which are staying the same, are (512) 477-5390 (home) and (512) 659-9526 (cell). Although they are not as mobile as they once were and can't get to our gatherings, Ernie wants to be sure we know how to reach them and to encourage people to keep in touch. Ernie and Shirley have given a great deal to many of our churches and ministers, and I encourage you to reach out to them.



As Bethany Congregational Church in San Antonio held their farewell service for retiring pastor Gerry Metzger, they surprised him with a real honor. The church named him their pastor emeritus, a way of expressing gratitude for his substantial ministry. As Gerry leaves, Bethany has called Rev. Dr. Thomas (Tom) Robinson as their interim. Our prayers for a full and faithful ministry go with Bethany at this important time.

Our prayers, too, for a joyous beginning to their retirement, go with Charles and Bonnie Stark, who moved at the end of the year from their home of many years at Slumber Falls to their new home near Coupland.

One more joyous beginning in the Heart of Texas Association has been the start of weekly Sunday morning worship for **Open Cathedral, our new church start in Leander.** They are meeting at Camacho Elementary at 10 am on Sundays, and would welcome all of us and any friends we would send over to their inclusive ministry, with its core beliefs of Open Minds, Open Hearts, and Open Faith. The first worship was Christmas Eve, and the first Sunday worship (with children as a third of the congregation) was on January 8th. Our prayer and hopes for a growing and vibrant ministry go with Open Cathedral and their minister, Ryan Hart.

Blessings in Christ,
Liz Nash, Heart of Texas Association Minister



**Art as a Way of Listening: A (Mixed Media Spiritual) Practice for Lent
10 a.m. Wednesdays at Eden Hill**

6:30-8 p.m. Open Studio at Casa de Boursier

Art as a Way of Listening is a spiritual practice which combines mixed media art with journaling as a pathway for listening to God. Learn how to combine mixed media art with visual journaling during an innovative process which integrates the traditional spiritual disciplines

of Lent with artful reflection.

Each of the six sessions focuses on a particular Lenten spiritual theme (Prayer, Gratitude, Simplicity, Confession, Service, Forgiveness, and Hope). Participants will use meditation and guided reflection together with diverse art materials to create a personal spiritual expression of the Lenten themes. *Art as a Way of Listening* is a contemplative spiritual practice which is about process and not the quality of the end product. No art experience required, and all art materials will be provided. Participants should bring their art or prayer journal, or they may do the guided art meditations on plain paper (provided).

Lent begins Wednesday, March 1st, and the six-week series launches the following week and concludes during Holy Week. The 90-minute sessions are being offered at two locations:

1. 10-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Eden Hill starting March 8th and also
2. 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesdays in the "Open Studio" format at the lead facilitator's personal art studio ("Casa de Mike & Helen Boursier" located off FM 1102; 4 miles north of FM 306).

Everyone is welcome to attend the Eden Hill option. However, the capacity limit for the Open Studio format is eight persons and requires an RSVP. If you are interested in participating in either context, contact Helen at helenb@boursier.us or (830) 730-3202.

The facilitators are Rev. Dr. Helen Boursier, Ph.D., and Rev. Sabrina Jennings who combine their love of mixed media art with theological reflection to create a unique spiritual practice of visual journaling. Both have facilitated art as a spiritual practice in diverse ministry contexts including inside an immigrant family detention center, at a shelter for at-risk teens, with 12-step recovery groups, and with grief groups. Helen is a retired Presbyterian (PCUSA) minister who currently teaches religious and theological studies online at University of St. Mary in Leavenworth, KS and College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, MN. Prior to being called to ordained ministry, she was a professional photographer and mixed media artist for 25 years. Sabrina is an ordained UCC minister who currently works as a community organizer for Corridor Interfaith Alliance for Families.



Journal Art by Sabrina



Journal Art by Helen

Invitation to the Lenten discipline through a contemplative integration of mixed media with reflection. No art experience required--the mixed media art reflection is about process not end product.

Congratulations to Benny Harst Whose 93rd Birthday

Was Celebrated at Eden Hill on Saturday, January 28th

At the celebration the following brief bio was shared. I thought I would reprint it here for our newer members who maybe don't know Benny's story and I suspect even those who do might learn something new.

Bernhard Marcel Harst was born on January 28, 1924, in Jakarta, Indonesia, the second of four children of Bernhard and Ida Harst. Theirs was a 3rd generation colonial, Indonesian-Dutch family, so Bennie was raised in middle-class comfort and attended Carpentier Alting Stichting te Batavia, the most prestigious private school in the Dutch East Indies. He was three months short of graduation when the Japanese invaded Indonesia in February 1941 and narrowly missed being interned in a prisoner of war camp. Instead, he spent the war years working as a potter in a Japanese ceramics factory, which enabled him to support the extended family of his high-school sweetheart, Nelly, as well as his own family during a lean and dangerous time.

Immediately after WWII ended, the Indonesian Revolution began, and he enlisted in the Royal Colonial Dutch Army, helping maintain a fragile peace during the often-violent period of transition to Indonesian independence. Shortly after he and Nelly got married in 1947, the flames of anti-colonial hatred grew stronger, and life in Jakarta became increasingly dangerous for Dutch citizens. Bennie left the Army and got a job as a shipping manager for the Royal Dutch Shipping Company (KPM), in the distant port city of Sampit, on the island of Borneo. They lived there for three years, until the Javanese soldiers arrived in Sampit, forcing Bennie, Nelly and their 2 year old son, Bart, to flee aboard a freight ship to the Netherlands.

They arrived in the Hague with very few possessions and little money, but Bennie found work as a civil servant in the Dutch government, starting in the mailroom and rapidly working his way up to a middle-management position in the Dutch social security department (GAK) over the course of four years, thanks to his administrative abilities and people skills. But he disliked life in Holland, because of its cold, damp climate, as well as the socio-economic discrimination faced by darker-skinned colonial refugees like the Harsts. Dreaming of a better life, he applied for immigration to America through the World Council of Churches, where their application was sponsored by First Protestant Church of New Braunfels. They arrived there on March 10, 1957, with only \$900, a few suitcases, four sons (Bart, Rudi, John, and Tom), and another (Arnold) on the way. A sixth son (Paul), was born the following year.



Starting from scratch once again, Bennie took the only work available at the Comal Cotton Textile Mill, first as a janitor and then as a weaver, working double shifts whenever possible, for four years. The Harst family was soon immersed in the life of the congregation at First Protestant Church, where Bennie became friends with Elmo Fischer, who was then working as the church secretary. When Elmo became the new Administrator of what was then known as the Eden Home for the Aged, he hired Benny to be the Assistant Administrator in 1962.

(Benny would hold this job until 1989 when he retired.) During his time he and Elm oversaw many expansions and building projects which laid the ground work to make Eden Hill what it is today.

Thank You Letters

Thank you for helping us build homes. Crystal Moore - Habitat for Humanity

Dearest Faith Church, We thank you so very much for making our Christmas week so very special. God bless you all. Flora, Jessie and Joana (Family Promise)

Dear Congregation/ Night Visitors, Our family appreciates your nights spent at the cabins with us. We have truly been honored to have met all of you. May the good Lord continue to bless you all as you've blessed our lives. Thank you, Flora, Jessica, Joana. (Family Promise)

Dear Friends at Faith, Thank you so much for your donation to help a guest with needed vehicle repairs. With your support, both financially and as a Host Congregation, we have been able to help 26 families with children overcome homelessness and move into secure, sustainable housing! Blessings to you all in this new year! Jan, FPGNB

Dear Friends in Christ, Thank you for your gift to the United Church of Christ. Per your request, your gift will be designated as follows: \$150 for Emergency USA - Louisiana flood relief and \$100 for Emergency USA - Hurricane Matthew. Your support of the United Church of Christ is extremely important to the work we do. Through it, you partner with us to support programs and services coordinated through the national setting to help local, national, and global communities change lives for the better. Should you have any questions regarding your donation, please call us at 800-846-6822. Faithfully, Mary A. Paxton, Office of Philanthropy and Stewardship

Dear Faith UCC, We extend a very special thank you for your contribution of \$399.92 that we received on December 30, 2016. We are certainly blessed by Churches like yours who keep us in mind. Camp is all about exploring faith and developing relationships to the Church. It becomes an interesting fact of life to see our young people taking an active role in the Church after being exposed to camp opportunities that fostered their spiritual journeys. Your contribution helps us attract positive role model leadership that in turn helps our campers learn to grow meaningful personal relationships with each other and with God. Together with God's grace and your willing partnership, we will continue the ministry of Slumber Falls Camp. We are looking forward to an exciting 2017! Sincerely, Terri Armstrong, Assistant Administrator

Dear Friends, On behalf of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, I'm writing to personally thank you for your generous gift of \$150 on 10/19/16. Your contribution makes it possible for us to meet new challenges at a time when, more than ever, we need a strong voice for inclusion and justice in Christ's church. We're proud that more than 1,375 congregations have adopted Open and Affirming covenants, but we are also acutely aware that nearly 3,700 UCC congregations (nearly 3/4s of our churches) have not yet taken this journey. Most LGBTQ and questioning youth in the UCC are growing up in these congregations. The Coalitions plan to grow the ONA movement - reaching every UCC church - is our moral responsibility to those youth, and to every LGBTQ person who is looking for a spiritual home. The UCC is today a very different place because of the Coalition and because of faithful leaders like you. But we're not the end of the journey. The years to come will present us with new opportunities to proclaim in word and action the Gospel of God's gracious and all-embracing love for humanity, for each of us. Thank you for helping us move confidently into that future. With supporters like you, the future of the LGBTQ ministry and advocacy in this church is bright. Yours in Christ, Andrew Lang, Executive Director

Worship Assistant List for February/March

2/ 5 Liturgist: Joseph Guerrero Acolyte: Ava Perry Council Rep: Kyle Kramm
AV: Michelle Perry Greeter: Nicolle Clark Hospitality: Vicky Geisler
Ushers: Kyle Kramm; Joseph Guerrero; Quinn Perry; Nicolle Clark Communion: Valerie Oates
Church School: Carol & Eddie Martinez & Kim Beauchamp Nursery: TBA

2/ 12 Liturgist: Hulen Brown Acolyte: Will Brown Council Rep: Will Brown
Greeter: Joe Ward Hospitality: Mikki Ward AV: Mikki Ward Nursery: TBA
Usher: Wil & Hulen Brown; Joe Ward; Church School: Karen Dietz and Joe Ward

2/19 Liturgist: Peter Bauer Acolyte: Hayes Marlow Council Rep: Mikki Ward
Greeter: Jennifer Marlow Hospitality: Chrissy Gossett AV: Tim Marlow
Usher: Joe & Mikki Ward; Jennifer Marlow; Richard Leber
Church School: Julie Allison & Nursery: TBA

2/26 Liturgist: Ralph Ludwig Acolyte: Sofia Beauchamp Council Rep: Kim Beauchamp
Greeter: Elly Beauchamp Hospitality: Kathy Leber AV: Jakob Beauchamp
Usher: Kim & Elly Beauchamp; Richard & Kathy Leber Nursery: TBA
Church School: Michelle & Nicolle Perry-Clark

3/5 Liturgist: Bob Manning Acolyte: Willow Leverett Council Rep: Joseph Guerrero
Greeter: Joe Ward Hospitality: Mikki Ward AV: Cassidy Martinez Nursery: TBA
Usher: Eddie & Carol Martinez; Joseph Guerrero; Mikki Ward Church School: Joe Ward &

3/12 Liturgist: Julia Allison Acolyte: Cade Perry Council Rep: Dan Geisler
Greeter: Nicolle Clark Hospitality: Vicky Geisler AV: David Reed
Usher: Dan & Vicky Geisler; Julia Allison; Nicolle Clark
Church School: Spring Break Nursery: TBA

If you cannot serve on the date(s) shown, please try to find a sub. If that is not possible, please leave a message at the church (830-625-6761) as soon as possible. If you would like to be added or removed from all or part of the Worship Assistant List, please contact the church office.



February Birthdays!

2-2 Sandy Ludwig

2-27 Merle Kosler

If I don't have your birthday down please let me know so I can add yours to the list!



**Pastor Scott Will Be on Vacation
& at a Back Bay Mission Board Meeting**

February 13-25th



I will leave for Florida on Monday February 13 and will be there until Thursday morning February 23rd. I will then be at a Back Bay Mission Board Meeting in Biloxi, Ms from Thursday night February 23rd to Saturday, February 25th at noon. Back in New Braunfels for church on Sunday February 26th.

My thanks to Rev. Peter Bauer will preach on Sunday, February 19th. In case of emergencies contact Janet Sherman, Pastoral Assistant.

February Church Calendar

2/1 TLU Lecture/Lunch Rabbi Mara Nathan (those carpooling meet at the church at 9:20 a.m.)

2/3-5 Confirmation Camp at Slumber Falls

2/5 Worship at 10:30 a.m. (no confirmation because of the Confirmation Camp)

2/7 Area Lectionary Study at Faith UCC 9-11 a.m. Book Study 6:30 p.m.

2/10-12 Slumber Falls Work Camp (Let's have a good turnout, especially on Saturday!)
RSVP on the camp website or call the camp. They need a number for meals and there is a small charge for meals.

2/12 Worship 10:30 Confirmation 11:45 - 2 p.m.

2/13-25 Pastor Scott on Vacation and a BBM board meeting 2/23-25

2/14 Book Study 6:30 p.m. Church Council 7 p.m.

2/15-16 SCC Clergy Retreat at Slumber Falls Camp

2/19 Rev. Peter Bauer preaches at Worship 10:30 a.m. Confirmation 11:45-2 p.m.

2/21 Book Study 6:30 p.m.

2/26 Worship at 10:30 a.m.
(Transfiguration Sunday) Confirmation
11:45-2 p.m.

2/28 Book Study 6:30 p.m.

Fabulous February
of promises of promise

Kiva Update!

As of January 27th we have \$5,540 in our church Kiva account. We have made 1077 loans in 77 countries around the world totaling \$38,025! We are in the top 1% of groups and individuals who have made loans through Kiva!



Juhudi Kilimo

Posted by **Margaret** from Chuka, Kenya Jan 26, 2017

Here is an update on one loan we made that was repaid in full.

[Thank you for your Kiva loan to Margaret](#)

Kenya

Dear lenders, We would like to express our appreciation for your generosity in support of Juhudi Kilimo and the smallholder farmers of Kenya. Your personal commitment has been incredibly helpful and allowed us to reach our goal of transforming lives. I am excited to report that Margaret has successfully repaid the loan to purchase a quality breed of dairy cow. Again, thank you! It is great to know that we have friends from all over the world who support our farmers.

Sincerely, The Juhudi Kilimo Team

Posted by **Margaret** from Chuka, Kenya Jan 26, 2017

Slumber Falls Work Camp February 10-12th

This camp is a work weekend open to anyone who wants to volunteer their time and energy to making improvements to the camp.

Please note there is a small fee of \$15.00 to help offset the cost of work camp.

There are jobs for all skill levels, everything from folding t-shirts to tearing down an old cabin to make room for a new cabin, from landscaping to cleaning, you name it! Saturday is the main day. You do not have to stay at the camp if you live locally. You don't have to work all day Saturday.



Do RSVP to the camp so they know how many are coming and how to plan for meals and prioritize the jobs to be done.