

## **News from the Brazos Association**

On Saturday, October 18, the Brazos Association held its Fall Meeting at St. John's UCC in Burton. Representatives were there from 12 of our Association churches. We enjoyed the warmth of good fellowship and the always welcoming spirit of St. John's – along with good food. After opening with a creative worship dialogue between Glenn Schoeneberg and Greg Felder, we passed a budget and conducted other business. A great joy that day was welcoming the Rev. Dr. Jerry Carpenter, pastor of Weimar UCC, into full standing (Privilege of Call) as a United Church of Christ minister after his ecclesiastical council. In this process, Jerry changes from having dual standing as a Methodist minister serving a UCC church. The "talking" portion of our meeting ended with a presentation by Ron Trimmer, Glen Schoeneberg, and Greg Felder on how churches and pastors can grow in spirit and be renewed by clergy sabbaticals. Since we have clergy due for sabbaticals in other churches in the Brazos Association, the presentation was timely as well as encouraging. We ended our time by sharing lunch and Holy Communion. Afterward, the South Central Conference Annual Meeting Planning Committee met to begin its work on the June 5-7 Annual Meeting, to be hosted by the Brazos Association at Huston-Tillotson University in Austin. Thank you, St. John's, for hosting us at our Fall Meeting!

I have three other pieces of good news in our Association to share. The first is that Tamara Franks has joined the staff of Friends Congregational Church in College Station as Associate Pastor. This is a temporary position with a several month contract that will help Friends with its ministry as they consider whether to call a permanent Associate. The second piece of good news is that Carla Cheatham will be ordained to the Christian ministry in the United Church of Christ on Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, at 3 pm at Friends Congregational Church. She has been called to be the pastor at Trinity United Church of Christ in Niederwald, where she has been part-time supply pastor for over a year. Carla continues, too, to serve as pastor of Creative Spirit, the new church start in South Austin. The third piece of good news is that, at the November South Central Conference Board of Directors meeting, I learned how generous our Brazos Association churches have been in supporting the work of the Conference and the national UCC through OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) Giving. Our Association is the one in the SCC that has increased its giving this year through the increased giving of most of our churches – not just one or two. Both the Conference and the national UCC struggle with meeting costs, but my experience is that our gifts to them are used faithfully and well in the service of Christ and the church. Their work touches all of our churches in more ways than I can share in this limited space – particularly through the pastoral search and call process but also in many other ways. Thanks Brazos Association churches!

Blessings in Christ, Liz Nash, Brazos Association Minister