

Happy New Year!

I pray that your Advent and Christmas Time was/is meaningful for you and your congregations. There were/are so many beautiful activities happening across the Heart of Texas Association in your local congregations and settings. It was/is beautiful to behold each setting celebrating the incarnation of the divine in sometimes unique, sometimes familiar ways.

As the new year begins, I've been thinking a lot about the role of an Association Minister. According to the job description one of the main focuses is to support local congregations via lay leaders, local clergy, and local clergy's families. In an effort to live into these expectations, I'm looking for ways to connect one-on-one and in groups in addition to visiting your local congregations. Additionally, is the call to foster connections between the 20 wonderful churches of the Heart of Texas Association and create ties to the South Central Conference and beyond. Following are some efforts to live into these efforts:

### **Clergy**

- ***First Tuesday of every month from 9:30 am - 11:30 am on zoom (for now)***. We can adjust time and place as we continue to move out of COVID. Part of this time will be fellowship and sharing, and the rest of the time we will creatively engage in the Marks of Ministry as we all strive to be healthy, well-rounded, growing clergy, regardless of our settings. Begins January 4th.
- Added bonus: the weekly Conference Cafe (Wednesday from 9:30 - 10:30) has been a wonderful way to connect with clergy all over the South Central Conference. Although not strictly Heart of Texas Association, a good number of HOTA clergy are regularly attending. We have a lot of fun wondering and stretching our theological understanding on such topics as what is a soul?, what does incarnation really mean?, and so on.

### **Lay Leaders**

- ***First Wednesday of every month from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm on zoom***. We will gather for a time of fellowship, sharing and dip our toes into educational pieces important for lay leaders. Begins January 5th. I could use your help in updating contacts (name & email) for your 2022 Lay Leaders. [Click here for form](#) or email me at [revnikkistahl@gmail.com](mailto:revnikkistahl@gmail.com).

These are both come and go so feel free to attend as you are able, for as long as you are able, even if it is to just pop on and say hello! Separate invites will be sent out to each group.

### **Annual Meeting Planning**

There is still time for both lay and clergy to jump in and help with 2022 Annual Meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 6th at 12 pm. [Email me](#) for the zoom invite.

### **Invite me to Worship with You**

So far I've been able to visit Bethany (San Antonio), Open Cathedral (Leander), Hope United (Georgetown), Trinity Church of Austin, Friends Congregational (College Station), Faith UCC (Bryan) and Faith UCC (New Braunfels). I have planned visits for St. John's UCC (Burton), Touchstone UCC (Boerne), St. Peter's UCC (Coupland), Redeemer UCC (Zuehl), and St. Paul's UCC (Corpus Christi). If you aren't on this list, let's plan a date!

### **Schedule a One-on-One**

I'm available for safe in-person visits, zoom or a good-ole fashion phone call.

### **FB and Instagram**

Information and cross-posting of your events and information happening here! Take a moment every once in a while to see what others in the Association are doing and/or share your good news!

Heart of Texas Association FB Page <https://www.facebook.com/HOTA.UCC>

Heart of Texas Association Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/heartoftexasassociation/>

Rev. Nikki Stahl, Association Minister FB Page <https://www.facebook.com/togetherwithyouonthejourney/>

Rev. Nikki Stahl, Association Minister Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/rev.nikkistahl/>

I pray that some or all of these ways help you feel a little less out there on your own and connected to the wider church. If topics or needs arise, remember I'm here to be with you on the journey.

Peace and Light,  
Nikki

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