

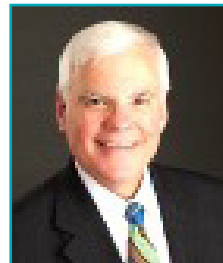


SCHOOL OF ESSENTIAL WISDOM SUMMER TERM *Continues*

Beat the heat with us this summer!

The School of Essential Wisdom is offering three Thursday sessions FREE of charge. That's right: no registration fee for summer 2023!

[Full catered lunch available for in person attendees: \$14.00]



June 15: Don Wiley Speaker and Writer

Don is a Lawyer, a Trusted Advisor for Philanthropy, Estate Planning, and Probate. His topic is:

"Helping Your Children Manage the Logistics of Your Estate"



July 20: Rev. John Mollet Texas Methodist Foundation

John Mollet is a retired Methodist minister who currently serves as a TMF Area Representative, who will offer a guide to help us through important end-of-life and legacy decisions. His topic is:

"Putting Your House in Order"



August 27: Detective Angelica Martinez and Detective Christopher Love

Detectives Martinez and Love are members of the Dallas Police Department Financial Crimes Unit. They will address the topics of:

"Internet Safety" and "Scams & Fraud"



Continuing Bible Study: **REVELATION**
Led by Mike Bennett
Sundays, 5:00-6:30 May 21 & June 4

FIND US ONLINE: To view detailed information about our Senior Life Ministry, or read current and past issues of the Spotlight newsletter, please visit our website at www.upumc.org/seniors.



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Last summer I taught a course on Legacy Wills. It was a delightful experience for me, and I believe it was inspiring for those who attended. On the last day, they asked if we might have another one in the future. In the meantime, I have written a manual for anyone who might be interested in the content, but unable to attend the course. I hope this manual will be published this summer.

The course revolved around three wills that you need to leave for your children and grandchildren. These are wills only you can leave. No one else can create them for you. These "Legacy Wills" are your: "Value Will," "Spiritual Will," and "Wisdom Will." It is impossible to review the course in this small space, but there is one foundational understanding I believe everyone can benefit from, something that is necessary for us to know even before we create any of these legacies. That one thing is how we view ourselves.

Consider this: Contemplative poet and philosopher John O'Donohue pointed out that we are actually two people. We are an inner person and an outer person. Our outer person is the one people see, hear, understand, love, and identify. Our inner person is made up of what we think, decide, and hold as memory. That outer person will one day die and be left here on earth in some form. The inner person, however, will immediately soar to heaven. To me, that inner person is soul. You don't HAVE a soul. You ARE a soul.

It is this soul who will be leaving these important wills. You will lay out what you value in the Value Will (e.g., integrity, fairness, education). You will reveal what you believe in the Spiritual Will (e.g., your credo, your deep understanding of God). And in your Wisdom Will, you will talk about what you have learned from your experiences that would be helpful to others.

When this manual comes out, I hope you will take a look at it, and then do what every child and grandchild hopes you will do -- leave your legacies. You will be glad you did.

In the meantime, allow me to pass along to you one of John O'Donohue's blessings: "May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique, that you have a special destiny here, that behind the facade of your life there is something beautiful, good, and eternal happening. May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride, and expectation with which God sees you in every moment."

Forever beginning,

Dede

Maryam Mathis, Editor | Jennifer Stinchcomb, Layout & Printing | Contact Maryam at 214-437-6311 or mmathis@upumc.org

University Park UMC | 4024 Caruth Blvd., Dallas, TX 75225 | (214) 368-1435 | mjmccurley@upumc.org

A Conversation with Rev. Emma Williams

Rev. Emma Williams became UPUMC's Executive Pastor in April, which is unusual timing for a new appointment. We were thrilled to welcome her, of course; and Emma made a flawless plunge into UPUMC's life in the midst of Lent and the run-up to Eastertide. From Day One, there was a multitude of meetings, services, events, and sermons for her to plan, attend, and deliver. So when she said she had time to chat one day recently, I jumped at the opportunity. Coming to us from the North Texas Conference as Director of Faith Formation, Emma has stepped into her new role with grace, energy, and a clear sense of purpose. She sees her role in our church as bringing a complementary skill set to that of Rev. Stobaugh, and intends to use those skills to realize the vision that Joe, the staff, and our congregation have been discerning for UPUMC.

The eldest of four, 3 girls and a boy, Emma was brought up to be comfortable asking questions. Her parents raised their children in the Methodist church and encouraged them to be confident in their beliefs, but not to fear asking "Why?". Emma's best friend's grandfather was the Music Minister at FUMC Shreveport, so the connection brought the family to that particular church, and kept her involved in music from an early age. She sang in the Children's Choir and Youth Choir at FUMC Shreveport, a community children's choir, and the Shreveport Opera Children's Chorus. She performed in musical theater through high school, then sang in the Centenary College Choir and the Chapel Choir in seminary. We have already been blessed to hear her clear, beautiful voice when she served as cantor in several of our Sunday services.

When asked about spiritual gifts she has to offer her new flock, Emma cited teaching, leading discussions, and connecting people and ideas. She also recognizes that she has a gift for bringing a plan or project to fruition, making it work "on the ground." Emma calls herself a "systems" person, one who sees how all the moving parts need to fit and function together.

When asked about persons who have had an influence on how she sees God, Emma shared that within just the last few years, she has been inspired by the teachings of a minister named Leanne Hadley who works with children to help them grow and develop spiritually, as they grow intellectually and emotionally. The idea that children are capable of hearing from God, if given the space and some tools to do so, is the basis of Rev. Hadley's teaching. Emma expressed her joy in

learning this way of coming to God in prayer and deepening our understanding of His Word; because so many times, we think that connecting with God has to be hard, when really it can be so simple. Children can do it, and so can we all.

Emma's husband, Rev. Alex Williams, is Senior Pastor at Ridgewood Park UMC. Their children are Henry (6), Simon (3-1/2), and Margot (1-1/2). The Williams family also includes a 10-year-old Golden Doodle named Stanley. One of their favorite family trips is going back to Shreveport for Mardi Gras. Emma pointed out that several of the traditional parades travel through the city's neighborhoods and are very family-friendly.

Visiting with Rev. Emma Williams was a delightful experience. A very approachable and genuine person, Emma is also someone who thinks deeply and is firmly grounded in her faith. I think you will agree that she is a blessing for all the generations at UPUMC



Chancel Choir Goes on the Road!

Friday, April 28

We leave Dallas by bus, plane, and automobile. The bus stops at Franklin's Barbeque in Austin to pick up lunch!



We meet up with the other groups travelling by plane and car for a picnic in a bucolic Central Texas setting.

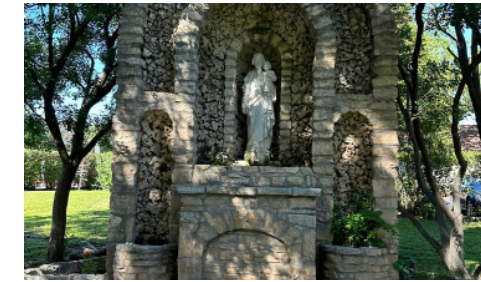


By mid-afternoon, we arrive at the Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio. There is time to rest or explore the campus before dinner.



Saturday, April 29

Breakfast at the Renewal Center, then a morning worship service in the St. Joseph Chapel, followed by a workshop led by Mark Pope: "Discovering a Major Choral Work." After lunch, we have time to enjoy the beauty of the sacred spaces both inside and outside the walls.



Mid-afternoon, we reconvene in the chapel to rehearse Sunday's service music. The Stobaughs drive down to join us in what is a real homecoming for them. Joe was Music Minister at Travis Park UMC 17 years ago; Ellie was baptized there.



After supper at a nearby restaurant, we gather in the chapel for vespers. Most of us retire; we'll be up early!



Sunday, April 30

8:35 am: We arrive downtown at historic Travis Park UMC, the oldest Protestant congregation in San Antonio, established in 1846.



Before the 9:45 service, we rehearse with the TPUMC choir in their magnificent sanctuary. Our first anthem is "Within Us Flows a River." Then, at the Offertory, both choirs sing "Peace in the Valley." What a blessing this weekend of music and fellowship has been for everyone of us!