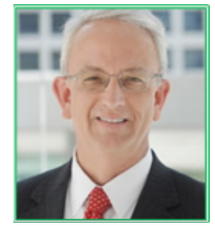
SCHOOL OF ESSENTIAL WISDOM

SPRING TERM Continues



APRIL **Charles Hosch: The Ethics in Technology**

April 7th – Ethics, Faith, and Cool Shiny Things: Skidding Into the Digital Age
April 14th – Dolly, Charlotte, and Crispr: Divine Creation and Human Enhancement
April 21st – Artificial Intelligence, Instant Communications, and Human Choice
April 28th – Social, Corporate, and Individual Responsibility in the Digital Age

MAY **Vic Casad: The Unfolding Tapestry of Your Life**

May 5th – Charting the Unfolding Tapestry of Your Life
May 12th – Plotting Your Redemption Story
May 19th – Claiming Your Public Narrative
May 26th – Where Is Your Story Taking You?

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH
APRIL

One of America's most beloved poets is Wendell Berry. A farmer and environmentalist who lives in Port Royal, Kentucky, Berry has published more than 50 books.

Enjoy this exquisite poem of his, along with a photo of a great blue heron feeding in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

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FIND US ONLINE: To view detailed information about our Senior Life Ministry, please visit our website at **www.upumc.org/seniors**

UPUMC
SENIORS
SENIOR Spotlight

Vol. XXII, Issue 3 | April, 2022

IT'S ABOUT TIME

In recognition of March being Women's History Month, last month's presenters on our Thursday School of Essential Wisdom webinars were five outstanding women clergy living in the Dallas area. Two are local pastors serving thriving, vital congregations; one is Director of Leadership Ministry at the Texas Methodist Foundation; one is Professor of Preaching and Worship at Perkins School of Theology, SMU; and one is enjoying retired status after serving in several local churches in the North Texas Conference, including serving in two after retirement. They shared many aspects of their experience as women in ministry, and one of them was their call to ordained ministry. (Newsflash: Every Christian Is Called To Ministry!) Ordained ministry is a special calling. And I believe the sense of being called to it must be addressed with the utmost care, sober consideration, in consultation with others, and subjected to trial and testing by colleagues in ministry who are endowed with the gifts and graces for mentorship. I am deeply grateful to those who guided me through my exploration into being called and to the process of exploration, trial, and testing which the United Methodist Church employs before ordaining clergy.

Frederick Buechner, in his wonderful book ***Wishful Thinking***, speaks beautifully – perhaps poetically – about how each one of us is called to some kind of constructive service by our common calling into the priesthood of all believers, when he says, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." This usually isn't an easy meeting place to find. In fact, Buechner warns, "There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than of Society, say, or the Superego, or Self-Interest."

Obviously it's true that discerning God's call TOWARDS certain choices means also accepting God's call AWAY from others. In his book ***Let Your Life Speak***, Parker Palmer writes, "If we are to live our lives fully and well, we must learn to embrace the opposites, to live in a creative tension between our limits and our potentials… We must take the no of the way that closes and find the guidance it has to offer – and take the yes of the way that opens and respond with the yes of our lives."

It is with these thoughts and reflections in mind that I share with you my decision to retire from the position of Minister of Senior Life at UPUMC, effective June 1st. Although it may be true that I accepted the position at a time of unusual need, and uncertainty, and changing methods for "doing ministry" (that is, during a pandemic and a new senior pastoral appointment), I was nevertheless profoundly optimistic that "all would be well" in God's good time. And so it has been.

My love for University Park UMC goes all the way back to my earliest memories, having been baptized as an infant at the church chancel, spent my childhood in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and summer church camps, and been guided through the treacherous waters of adolescence by wise, compassionate youth directors and supportive UMYF friends. I am grateful for the chance to have had some time to "give back" here in my *second half of life*, and my love will continue to deepen as UPUMC's future unfolds. As I understand my calling taking me in new directions and with continuing optimism for the future, I wish you all the very best.

Grace and Peace,

Stephen

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United Methodist Women is now United Women in Faith

On March 7, 2022, the UPUMC Unit of United Methodist Women hosted National UMW Vice President Cynthia Rives in Fellowship Hall. Ms. Rives spoke enthusiastically about the rebranding of the 156-year-old organization. She outlined for the members and guests several new programs and initiatives that come with the name change, as well as the opportunities for inclusion of faithful women everywhere.

UPUMC Unit President Mickey George with National UMW Vice President Cynthia Rives

Also on March 7, *UMC Resource* published the news online, giving the rationale behind the rebranding: "The changes are designed to address the different needs and life stages of current members and new women and expand options for membership and engagement. The new name also aims to welcome current members whose local churches may choose to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, as well as women of other faith traditions who want to join."

After Ms. Rives' presentation, members of UPUMC's four circles enjoyed fellowship and refreshments. Before adjourning for the day, they filled ***500*** plastic Easter eggs with candy for an "Eggstravaganza," which took place April 2nd at Dallas Bethlehem Center.

Come see!!

WEEKDAY SCHOOL SPRING ART SHOW

in the ATRIUM

THROUGH APRIL

Celebrating the Week of the Young Child

Spotlight on UPUMC Staff - Jennifer Tucker

Jennifer Tucker is Finance Manager at UPUMC. You may not have met her, but she has worked in our business office for 10 years. If you are fortunate enough to meet Jennifer one day, you will be delighted you did. Jennifer has a warm confident way about her that makes you certain of three things: she is knowledgeable, perceptive, and enjoys using her gifts and talents to serve others.

A native of Erie, Pennsylvania, Jennifer moved to Texas with her parents and five siblings when she was five years old. She was raised in Amarillo but attended Texas Tech for her undergraduate degree. After graduation, Jennifer moved to Dallas where she completed an MBA program at SMU, with a focus on Finance, and worked initially at NationsBank.

Jennifer met her husband, Glenn, at a fundraiser. An attorney who grew up in Dallas and was raised in FUMC downtown, Glenn won points with Jennifer almost immediately because he shared her love of dogs. Fast forward a few years: the Tuckers have three children: Davis, a senior at Trinity University in San Antonio, Gracie, a sophomore at Vanderbilt, and Fulton, a sophomore at Highland Park High School. Their family also includes three dogs: two Labs and one mutt. Jennifer loves spending time with her family, training their Lab puppy, Remy, and running.

The Tuckers made the decision that Jennifer would stay at home with their children; but when Fulton started school, she sought a part time job. She was hired here at UPUMC, working 10 hours a week with Constance Harp and George O'Reilly. Over the years, her hours have tripled; but she's still able to be at home when her son's school day is over. Jennifer's work responsibilities include paying UPUMC's bills, handling member contributions, and sending Foundation funds to the church's investment company. Christmas and Stewardship seasons are her busiest times of the year. When asked, she says that her favorite thing about working at UPUMC is the environment: the people she works with, like Constance and the rest of the staff, as well as the volunteers who are around the church on weekdays.

Although she grew up Catholic, Jennifer became interested in Protestant denominations as early as junior high, where she was influenced by friends who prayed for her to "have God in her life." Even though they clearly doubted that she was a Christian (because she was, after all, a Catholic), her friends made her aware of the value of reading the Bible, and helped her explore different spiritual practices. In college, she began attending a Methodist church where her sorority sisters worshipped. Jennifer found Methodists very welcoming; and was attracted to their emphasis on service, small group studies, and devotionals. She also found that the sermons of Methodist pastors made sense to her and touched her deeply. It is not surprising that Jennifer and Glenn were married in the Methodist church and have raised their children in Highland Park UMC, where they are longtime members.

Fiske Miles LIBRARIAN, LINDA TAYLOR, recommends:

WORLD WAR II FICTION