



UPUMC
FOREVER BEGINNING

WORDS TO THE WISE



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Season of Change



As the summer fades, kids are back to school and fall is just around the corner, we are reminded of the beauty of God's design.

Each leaf, as it changes color and gently falls, testifies to God's artistry. The crisp air, the soft light of shorter days and the quiet rustling of trees all point to the truth that creation declares God's glory (Psalm 19:1).

Fall teaches us that nothing is stagnant-God has woven change into the fabric of our world. As the trees release their foliage, we are reminded of the call in Ephesians 4:22 to "put off the old self". So too are we in a new season here at UPUMC with many changes.

So, just as the trees shed their leaves, we too are called to release burdens, defects of character and sins, trusting that God's design for renewal is always at work, even when the world seems adrift.

The season of fall, then, is more than just a shift in weather-it is a living testimony that God's creation is both purposeful and beautiful, designed to remind us of His goodness and faithfulness in every season.

Forever Beginning,

Mary Jo McCurley

A Thanksgiving Prayer

Lord, behold our family here assembled. We thank thee for this place in which we dwell, for the love that unites us, for the peace accorded to us this day, for the health, for the food, and the bright skies that make our lives delightful, for our friends in all parts of the earth. Give us courage, gaiety, and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften us to our enemies. Bless us, if may be, in all our innocent endeavours. If may not, give us the strength to encounter that which is to come. May we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune loyal and loving to one another. As the clay to the potter, as the windmill to the wind, as the children of their sire, we beseech of Thee this help and mercy for Christ's sake. Amen. ~ ~Robert Louis Stevenson

Maryam Mathis, Editor | Jennifer Stinchcomb, Layout & Printing | Contact Maryam at mmathis@upumc.org

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

The Gift of Music

On October 5, 2025, Alex Gonzales, Composer in Residence and Lead Tenor of the UPUMC Chancel Choir, presented a concert of his music in our sanctuary. To showcase his works, Alex collaborated with the Director and students from the Forney High School Chamber Choir, colleagues from the professional vocal ensemble Inspirata, and members/soloists from the UPUMC Chancel Choir.

[From the program notes:] Since 2015, Alex has gained recognition for his choral compositions, known for their emotional depth and accessibility for choirs of all levels. In 2022 he was invited to be the Headline Composer for the MSU Red River Choral Festival, cementing his reputation as a leading voice in contemporary choral music.... His notable projects include the commissioning of the piece “Community of Voices” composed for the Dallas area 2023 Interfaith Services.

Even before the concert began, the sanctuary filled almost to capacity with folks from Forney, as well as from the Park Cities. A special part of the experience was witnessing the excitement of Alex’s young students and their families from the Garland Beaver Technology Center in Garland. Alex is clearly very skilled at inspiring children to discover their own creativity and love of music.



After the concert, patrons, family and friends enjoyed a wonderful reception in the gathering area. The photo features Alex with the two soprano soloists from our Chancel Choir, Jennifer McDaniel, and Tiffany Silva.

Thanksgiving Thoughts by Sharon Christen

I was sitting in the dining room with residents at our senior retirement center. It was close to Thanksgiving. We were talking about earlier holidays with family and friends and what our particular job had been in preparing the meal. It may have been making the pies – several flavors to accommodate the crowd. Or preparing the stuffing or dressing with corn bread or white bread depending on where you lived. Mine was making the cranberry sauce from fresh cranberries – although our kids always preferred the canned variety.

The worship and work of the church is like preparing a Thanksgiving meal. We all have gifts to share. And we all receive from others. In a worship service the preacher preaches, the choir sings, the reader shares scripture, the acolyte lights candles. During the week, pledges are mailed so bills can be paid. Homebound members pray for those who have asked for prayers during difficult times. Sunday school teachers prepare lessons and pray for their students. Men pick up loaves of day-old bread from the grocery store and take them to a homeless shelter. The custodians make sure rooms are in readiness for meetings. And someone always makes sure the coffee is hot and the donuts are bought!

Whether it’s the family or the church or faith community, the gift of each person is necessary to the whole body. With joy we share our gifts and with gratitude we receive the gifts of others.

Sunday Evening Bible Study
November 2 – 30
Why?: Making Sense of God's Will
By Adam Hamilton

Where is God when tragedy and suffering strike?

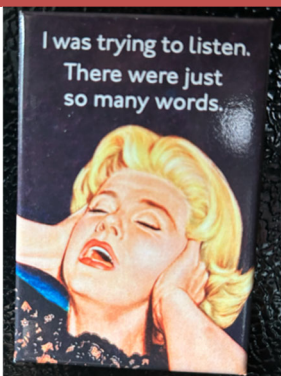
When the ground shakes, and a poor nation's economy is destroyed; when the waters rise, washing away a community's hopes and dreams; when a child suffers neglect and abuse; when violence tears apart nations where is God? If God is all powerful, and if each one of us is a beloved child of God, then how can God allow tragedy and suffering to mar his creation? All are welcome as we read and discuss Why?, by best-selling author Adam Hamilton.



Weekly Topics:

- Nov. 2: Chapter 1: "Why Do the Innocent Suffer?"***
- Nov. 9: Chapter 2: "Why Do My Prayers Go Unanswered?",***
- Nov. 16: Chapter 3: "Why Can't I See God's Will for My Life?"***
- Nov. 23: Chapter 4: "Why God's Love Prevails"***

Please join us on Sundays at 4:00PM in Rooms 102/103
Led by Mark Parker



NEW FEATURE!!! The Cold Hard Truth

Do you have a favorite refrigerator magnet you would like to share with your Forever Beginning friends?? Just forward your photo to Maryam Mathis at mmathis@upumc.org. This should be fun!



SCHOOL OF ESSENTIAL WISDOM

November: Turkey Talk!

Please join us each Thursday at 11 AM in the Parlor during the month of November as our speakers present topics to help us enjoy our friends and loved ones throughout the holiday season.

Speaker Schedule:



Nov. 6: Tony Pederson, Professor Emeritus in journalism at SMU: "Whatever Happened to the News?"



Nov. 13: Dr. Anne Morris, Psychologist, PhD: "Keeping the Peace at the Table: How to Navigate Tough Conversations".



Nov. 20: Rev. Colin Craft, UPUMC Minister of Youth/Families "Hue Do You Think You Are?": How Different Personalities Communicate Effectively.



Nov. 27: No meeting (Thanksgiving Day)