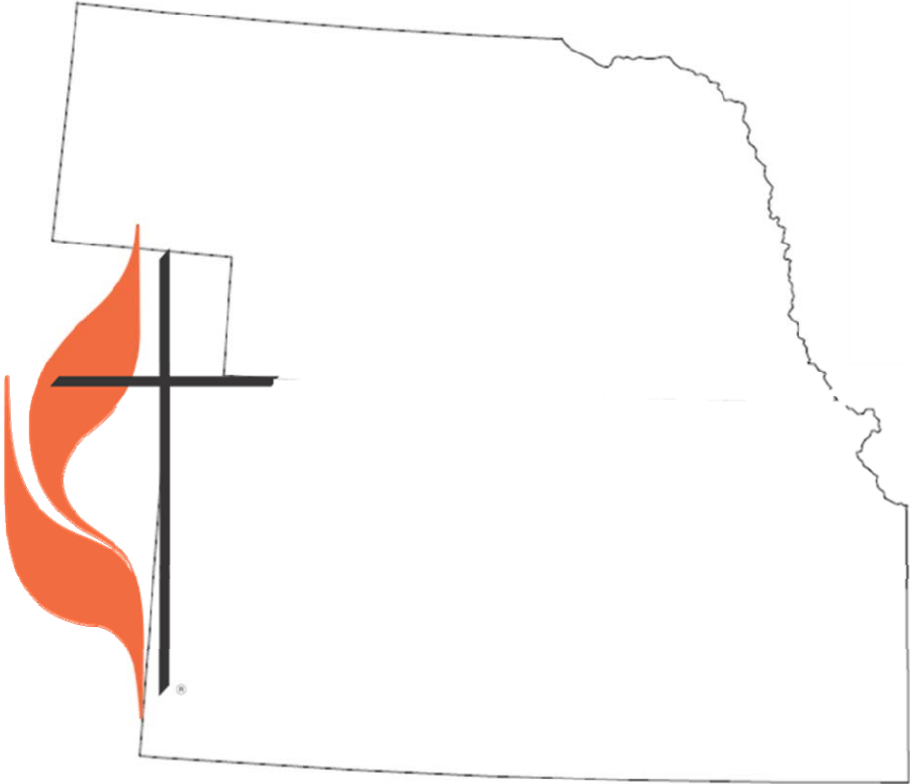


NEBRASKA-KANSAS EPISCOPAL AREA TASK FORCE



Task Force Member Biographies



NEBRASKA-KANSAS EPISCOPAL AREA TASK FORCE

Bishop Scott J. Jones

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Married to Mary Lou Reece, Mary Lou owns Reece Construction with an office in Scandia and Salina KS. We have 3 grown children, Jameson, Arthur and Marynell. Jameson is married to Malena and lives in Colorado; Arthur is married to Erin and lives in North Carolina and Marynell lives in Texas and is finishing her Master's Degree in Business. Cocoa the Chocolate Lab lives with Marynell but comes to visit often.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Renewal of the UMC and the ability to serve God to make the world a better place

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Water Ski, Snow Ski, Golf, Scuba Dive, Read Novels

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Perseverance, Curiosity, Connector

What annoys you most - and why? Wasting time and wasting money because both are precious gifts from God that let us do more.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Education in Africa

What has been your favorite vacation? Hiking in Alaska

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? Transforming Mission – because it helped me see the new testament as a missionary document

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? “The Blind Side” – because people crossed boundaries and made sacrifices to help change someone else’s life

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? John Wesley

What is your favorite food? Moo Goo Gai Pan

What legacy would you like to leave? A growing and fruitful United Methodist Church

Bishop Ann Sherer-Simpson

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I am married to Wayne Simpson, who is a retired industrial engineer. Between us we have 5 children: Robbie Sherer, who works for Hewlett Packard, is married to Jennifer and they live in Houston, TX with my grandson Max; Ann Marie Trammell, who supervises language arts in a regional public school system, is married to Brian and they live in Fort Worth, TX with my grandson Michael; Jenny Simpson is a nurse in Omaha; Lori Simpson is an engineer in Washington, DC; and Kristi Simpson, who works for the Episcopal Church and skis in Breckenridge, CO. We have 2 pets: a 21-year-old black cat named Wraith and a 6-year-old Shih Tzu named Mikey.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I graduated from seminary in 1968 and began my work as a lay employee of the church. I have been a United Methodist clergy person for 33 years.

Passions: reading in a book club, hiking, sharing deeply with friends.

Passions in ministry: leadership development and deployment to strengthen the fruitfulness of the church. I so long for disciples of Jesus Christ to be effective agents of change for the world and have valued and participated in enumerable Volunteer in Mission and mission and ministry efforts through the years.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry?

Name three personality traits that best describe you.

What annoys you most - and why?

XX when people are not willing to make a decision

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Developing the Missouri Conference Mozambique Initiative experience and the Nebraska-Nigeria Partnership.

What has been your favorite vacation? Yellowstone Park with my kids and grandkids, and lazy-time at the lake house in Texas.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why?

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why?

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life?

What is your favorite food? Anything with brown sugar.

What legacy would you like to leave? Children and grandchildren, friends, colleagues who know they have been loved and cared for.

Professional: a church better committed to making disciples who live lives of radical discipleship.

Rev. Charlotte Abram

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I have been married to Terry Abram for 41 years. We have three grown children, Noni Cambridge, 38, Terra Johnson, 35 and Fred Abram 27. Our daughters are married and each has two children. Our grandchildren Ayana, Terra, Elijah and Victor are the delights of our lives

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I am passionate about cooking up and presenting great sermons and great food. Additionally, I have developed an interest in genealogy.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? My husband and I have begun to enjoy "date nights" again. We also enjoy walking for health and pleasure

Name three personality traits that best describe you. I think most people would say that I am passionate, compassionate and understanding

What annoys you most - and why? I certainly can't pick the "late" issue, because as my husband says, I always think I can get one more thing done...and then end up rushing to appointments. That's a fault I am working on. I think the one thing that annoys me most is when people are not open to various ideas and perspectives. I find that when I am open to seeing issues from other people's perspectives, that either helps me firm up my view point and state it more clearly. Or it helps me move off dead center and discover other ways that might just be more effective or impactful. Additionally, there have been times when the merger of thoughts or ideas have helped us carve out new paths and solutions that are a blend of several thought patterns and perspectives.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Wow, there have been so many times my spirit has been moved beyond this realm to experience a brief but impactful HALLELUJAH! My heart is always touched when I am in gatherings of our global church and I hear the stories of how we are collectively touching individual lives and situations all over the world. My heart is also touch when tears roll down the cheeks of a person who receives that cup of water or crust of bread or that hug of acceptance and compassion that they long for.

What has been your favorite vacation? Several years ago we took our first family cruise vacation since our children were grown. It was great being together and experiencing their excitement.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? I enjoy reading Joyce Rupp, Howard Thurman. However Dr. Martin L. Kings, Strength to Love, still challenges me to grow and move beyond the comfort zones in my life.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Lately, I've been drawn to movies that focusing more on the resilience of humanity than the goodness of humanity. Consequently, movies like "Precious" have drawn me in more. I know too many children for whom those situations are real. So I ask "Where is God?" And I see God somewhere deep down inside this wounded soul that refuses to give up. I see God in the loving teacher and demanding Social worker.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Sunday School teachers like Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Justice, pastors like Emmett Streeter, Bishop Leontine TC Kelley, and historical figures like Harriett Tubman, and MLKing join the ranks of my mother and my father Pauline and Fred McGruder as my heroes/and heroines

What is your favorite food? Do you really expect me to name just one? Greens and cornbread; Hamburgers and French fries, peach cobbler and CHOCOLATE CAKE. Oops I forgot Mac n'cheese

What legacy would you like to leave? I hope to leave a legacy of love.

Rev. Wayne Alloway, Jr.

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.) Married to Analise, daughter Sarah – 21, son Peter – 16, and two dogs, Oz and Mulligan



What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Preaching, reading spy novels, international intrigue

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Golf, movies, inventing things

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Gallup strength finder: Woo, Positivity, Command, Adaptability, Significance

What annoys you most - and why? When people are too unfocused.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? I have a passion for ministries related to children.

What has been your favorite vacation? San Diego in the middle of January.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? Wounded Healer by Henri Nouwin

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? The Blind Side

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Gandhi – I grew up in India (first 18 years of my life.) Gandhi had great leadership traits.

What is your favorite food? Biryani

What legacy would you like to leave? I gave my best to my family and my community.

Rev. Pat Ault-Duell

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? My husband, Tim, and I have been married to each other for 32 years. Tim is also a UM pastor, and we have served together in the KW conference since about 1979.

Our son, Charlie, is a lawyer working for the Kansas Court of Appeals in Topeka; he will be marrying his fiancé this coming summer. Our daughter, Margi, recently graduated from Drew Seminary, works for a non-profit in Tucson, AZ, which deals with immigrant issues.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Environmental sustainability/ economic justice; rural development

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? gardening, painting, hiking, kayaking

Name three personality traits that best describe you. I'm a card-carrying introvert; very even-tempered; and curious about most things.

What annoys you most - and why? Of the items listed, the one that annoys me most is dealing with people who are not open to various ideas and perspectives. I think this bothers me because I am so very intrigued by novelty and innovation and I have a hard time identifying with people who don't even want to see what's on the other side of the fence!

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? I've returned to Ciudad Quesada, Costa Rica several times for mission trips and have loved every experience there. However, I think the VIM trip that touched me the deepest was Operacion Hogar in Juarez, Mexico, because of the exposure it gave us to extreme poverty and to border injustices.

What has been your favorite vacation? Spending Semana Santa (Holy Week) in Spain with my daughter---or a week on Cozumel with my husband. Hard to pick which one was better!

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? "A Generous Orthodoxy" by Brian McLaren. I wish I had written that book. I so appreciate his clarity, but even more do I appreciate his heart.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? I just saw "Invictus" and loved it! (Even though I don't think I want to see a real rugby game!) Can leaders change themselves? Can leaders change others? What marvelous things happen when leaders offer themselves without reserve to worthy goals!

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? A public figure I have long admired is Thomas Jefferson. But my real heroes have been more personal--my husband Tim and a handful of teacher, bishops, colleagues and friends.

What is your favorite food? My homemade tamales with pico de gallo.

What legacy would you like to leave? A United Methodist Church that takes personal and social holiness seriously into the future!

Rev. Gary Beach

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Married to Betty for just over 31 years. Two children: a son, Dan, who is 26 and a daughter, Stephanie, who is 24.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Serve as Director of Connectional Ministry for the Kansas East Conference. My passion is to assist the church to be more vital and vibrant than it is today.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Love to travel.

Name three personality traits that best describe you: Fun-loving, stickler for details, steady

What annoys you most - and why? Meetings where little is done and there is satisfaction with meeting for meetings sake.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Nothing But Nets

What has been your favorite vacation? An extended family vacation that covered many of the national parks in the western portion of the US

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? "Unbinding . . ." series (. . . the Gospel, . . . your Church, . . . your Heart) by Martha Grace Reese. Fresh new look at ways to open ourselves and our church to the newness and vitality God offers.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Don't watch many movies.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Leo Chance – home church pastor during formative years who ultimately made it possible for me to sense and respond positively to a call to ministry in my life. He demonstrated a remarkably healthy pastoral leadership role in a somewhat difficult ministry setting.

What is your favorite food? Chicken cordon bleu

What legacy would you like to leave? A more vibrant and vital UMC.

Rev. Cheryl Jefferson Bell

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Cheryl Jefferson Bell, single, 4 children: Lisa-25; Keira-23; Creighton-20 & Victoria-19 3 grandchildren: Shey-4; Michael-2; Elijah-6mts

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Jesus Christ & The Church and Music

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Movies and starting on utilizing my Master Gardener knowledge!

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Joyful; Compassionate; Genuine

What annoys you most - and why?

- when people are late -- when people are not willing to make a decision
- when people are not open to various ideas and perspectives: because they have shut themselves up for other possibilities, opportunities, and others.
- when people are too unfocused

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? United Methodist Open Door which provides basic needs for people in need!

What has been your favorite vacation? Going to Disney Land with my family when my children were younger!

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? Three Months with The Spirit by Justo L. Gonzalez because it helped me to see and recapture the importance of the Church and the role of the Holy Spirit in the growth of the Church.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? For the season of Christmas, Scrooge, because it shows how the love of God can transform even the coldest of hearts! and how that transformed heart can impact others.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Jesus!

What is your favorite food? Meat!

What legacy would you like to leave? That I loved others as God has loved me through Jesus Christ!

Rev. Troy Bowers

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Happily married to Amy for the past 22 years. Two teenage daughters! Jovi, 17, Sidnee 15, two dogs, two cats, three rabbits, about 10,000 bees.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Helping young adults and young families gain or deepen a spiritual walk.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Love to travel. Have lived overseas for 8 years. Participating and watching sports. Play tennis. Raise bees and honey. Helping daughters with geometry homework.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Creative, Loyal, Encouraging.

What annoys you most - and why? When people talk, whisper, text, etc. when someone else is talking to a group, or making a presentation. I believe it shows such disrespect!

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Building Habitat for Humanity homes in Bolivia.

What has been your favorite vacation? Alaskan inner passage way cruise.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The Bible! I always feel we read too many other books which tell us about the Bible, or about what the Bible says, maybe we should read the actual book more. I like the praise chorus, "Ancient words ever true, changing me and changing you. We have come with open hearts, O let the ancient words impart."

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Blindsight. (Probably because I just saw it, and it shows Christian Faith in action.) Plus, it has Sandra Bullock in it!

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? My Father. A man of Christian integrity who lives his faith everyday in the real world.

What is your favorite food? Well, that depends! Salad - Wilted Spinach leaf, Soup - Olive Garden's Minestrone. Entree - Maine Lobster, Dessert - a good old fashioned gooey Chocolate Chip Cookie. Beverage - A glass of red Shiraz/Cabernet blend (Oops, can I say that?)

What legacy would you like to leave? He lived justly, showed mercy, and walked humbly with his God.

Rev. Eduardo Bousson

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I am married to Karen Jeffcoat. We have been married now for 11 years (Jan. 2. 1999). We have two children: Isabel who is 8 (Apr. 16, 2001) and Elijah who is 6 (Oct. 28, 2003)

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I am passionate about learning. specially about the things that help me understand human beings and the workings of the universe. I am working now on Albert Einstein's biography by Walter Isaacson. WOW!

I am also passionate about hope. Perhaps that is why I love being in ministry. Hope helps us forge a better future. Therefore, I am passionate about spreading hope.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? I love to watch movies, and approach them not solely as entertainment but as pieces of art. My favorite movies are philosophical/artistical. (For example, "Stranger than Fiction" "The Man looking Southeast") I also love astronomy. Anything that points to the enjoyment and exploration of that other frontier.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Personable, funny (at least, I like to think), and reserved.

What annoys you most - and why? When people whine, or play the victim. I usually have a visceral reaction when I encounter that behavior.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Honduras. I learned there the true meaning of hope.

What has been your favorite vacation? Swimming in the dark in a bioluminescent bay... wow.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? One book that has affected me has been "If Grace is True." A radical understanding of the grace of God. I read it 6 years ago and I am still wrestling with it. The other one is "The Little Prince." A simple classic.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Stranger than Fiction. Can't say why without spoiling it!

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Archbishop Romero, from El Salvador. He found himself in a place he did not want, and still pushed himself to be faithful. Gave his life in that attempt.

What is your favorite food? Mac and Cheese.

What legacy would you like to leave? Help people to see beyond themselves into something Greater. Thinking beyond differences and into commonalities. A definite changed world. I do not want to settle for nothing less.

Rev. Carol Roettmer Brewer

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? My name is Carol Roettmer Brewer and I am married to James S. Brewer who is a clergy member of the Nebraska Conference. We have one grown son Scott Brewer who is married to Allison Mayer. They live in Nashville where Scott works for GCFA and Allison is a Special Education teacher.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I am a pastor who serves currently as a District Superintendent. As of February 1, I will be the Director of Connectional Ministries/Staff Leader for the Nebraska Annual Conference.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? I enjoy walking and reading light mysteries.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Organized, interested in others and willing to laugh

"What annoys you most - and why?"

- when people are late
- when people are not willing to make a decision
- when people are not open to various ideas and perspectives
- when people are too unfocused
- other

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Doing clean-up in New Orleans in 2006 with the Appointive Cabinet

What has been your favorite vacation? I enjoy going to the Pacific Northwest to see my husband's relatives.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? Recently it has been Joyce Rupp's book Walking in a Relaxed Way.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Recently it would be "The Blind Side" because it shows a family who was willing to open their home to another and then encouraged his talents.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Recently it has been a 70 year old woman who took a part-time job to pay a non-relative's school costs.

What is your favorite food? bagels

What legacy would you like to leave? I hope that some will give thanks for my life and ministry.

Dixie Brewster

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Married 23 years to husband – Dean
2 Children – Blake 20 - Student at Wichita State University, Education Major, Volleyball Mgr. Ali 17 - Argonia High School Junior, active in athletics, choir, Kay Club and Stuco, 1 Dog – Skeeter, a Dalmatian, 2 Cats – Tom & Jerry II



What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Outside the church, I love farming and coaching high school girl's basketball in addition to my family. Inside the church, my passion is positive lay leadership that inspires others to strive for excellence in Christianity and motivates a servant's heart.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Go out to eat, wash the car, play cards, ride 4-wheelers.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Inspired, Motivated, Competitive

What annoys you most - and why?

X- when people are not willing to make a decision when it is desired

X- when people are too unfocused and won't think beyond themselves

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Mission work at, and the ministry of, UM Open Door & Camp Horizon

What has been your favorite vacation? Table Rock Lake in Missouri -- Washington D.C.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The Bible – It inspires me every time I read it. Running With The Giants – John C. Maxwell – Jonathan, Nehemiah, and David are included in this collection of Old Testament Heroes. They teach us about servant hearts and Christ-like attitudes that encourage great thinking and make it known that it is all about God and not themselves.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Remember the Titans

Why? Community – Team Work – Dedication – Competitive Spirit – Humor - Love & Desegregation – all wrapped up in one great movie.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? My Granddad – smart, caring, fun, hard-working, kind

What is your favorite food? Pizza

What legacy would you like to leave? I would want to be known as a Joyful United Methodist Christian that was always kind, caring, and never posed a bad attitude about anything. My number one priority would be God, followed by family and others. I would hope never to be selfish and to be thankful to God in all circumstances. Ideally, the United Methodist Church would be where the Holy Spirit is moving and reaching out in places never touched before, because of the dedication I shared with the denomination. This is a dream, and a goal, and if God's calling on my life includes this, I hope I can fulfill the dream.

Rev. Gary Brooks

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and gbrooks@kswestumc.org (my eyes only)



Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? My wife is Jeanne (Registered Nurse). We have 3 daughters – Kristi (A Certified Nurse Aide in Davenport, IA), Kari (Columbia, MO where she is finishing up a Master of Music Performance at University of Missouri), and Kelli (lives with us in Wichita – until she goes to Emporia State for a Master in School Psychology Fall 2010). Our grandson, Gage, 6

years old, lives with us. We are his legal guardians. He calls me “Dad”, and loves to do everything I do and go everywhere with me. Pets – a Yorkie and miniature Dach.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Passion inside the church – a District Superintendent for the Wichita East District, Kansas West (began July 2009). I love to preach, encourage, and strategize on ways to become a more effective leader. I love the “win-win” scenario, and believe that no one needs to lose. In this role as DS, I have witnessed and been amazed at the great faith and resources our churches have, and hope to channel these where I can to be more effective in disciple making for Jesus Christ.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? I like to ride a bicycle (Bicycled Across Kansas 8 different years), play the piano, and tinker with woodworking.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Happy, possibility thinker, encourager.

What annoys you most - and why? Four pet peeves – messing up my hair, messing up my glasses, sitting on my car, and saying “It can’t be done.” I also can’t stand intolerant people (Yes, I know I’m a confessed intolerant of intolerants).

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Local mission projects that “paint and repair” in the community in which I live – I like being part of the answer, rather than part of the problem. I have also done mission trips where I have traveled. I’ll never forget replacing blown away shingles on a roof in Carlsbad, New Mexico. The 6 year old boy of the family we were helping wanted up on the roof with me (it was a gentle slope). I was teaching him how to replace shingles and hammer nails. While he was hammering a nail, he missed and hit his thumb instead. He looked at me with great pain. I told him, “Just say ‘Praise the Lord’”, which he commenced doing in rapid succession for the rest of the day.....

What has been your favorite vacation? Riding my road or mountain bike in the Colorado mountains – following trails, creeks, and switchbacks.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? Ken Collins book, “The Scripture Way of Christianity”. It is a great primer for folk in the pew to understand the theology of John Wesley, and to ask “how can I extend the grace of God in my life?”

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? “Coach Carter” – an excellent feature film about the joys and pitfalls of leadership. “The Blind Side” – with Sandra Bullock – a true story of how a family takes in a homeless youth, and loves him into the fullness of life – he becomes a professional football player. Great movie – thought provoking.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Captain James T. Kirk – of the Starship Enterprise – going where no one has ever gone before – daring to risk, refusing defeat, and forging a path for what is right and good, no matter what the personal cost.

Billy Graham – one TV evangelist that didn't go bad – he kept integrity, he walked the talk, and he believed passionately in what Christ's mission was through him. I didn't always agree with him, but I want to walk the talk and do the right thing because of him.

My grandfather Elmer and grandmother Lois – Elmer was the minister, Lois the musician that taught me music – “anyone can bang on a piano – but can you make music with it?” My father Bob and mother Maxine – Bob is the minister, Maxine the school teacher – who raised me to “do the right thing – always, period.”

What is your favorite food? Pepperoni Pizza, MacDonald's French Fries (all in moderation, of course), and whatever my wife, Jeanne, likes to eat. Eating with her makes just about every kind of food delicious.

What legacy would you like to leave? I would like people to remember that I made a difference – having left the landscape of life better for my having been here. I want people to believe, “He always did the right thing, to the best of his ability.” “I would want them to remember my motto – “I would rather help and find later that it was a mistake, than to have not helped, and find that it was Christ knocking at my door.”

Nancy Brown

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Myron, a retired research veterinarian, and I have been married forty years. We have two sons. Derek and his wife Gretchen and son Elijah (two in February) live in Charlottesville, VA. He is an attorney, and a Major in the Army JAG Corp where he will be teaching environmental law for the next two years. Jason, our younger son, died in August 2007 at age 33; his wife Lynn and our precious granddaughter Marli (four in March) live close, and we see them often. We have three large dogs, White (Pyrenees), Ebony (scraggly mutt) and Webster (bull mastiff/pit bull mix).

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I was a Kansas State Legislator for ten years, left to become the Executive Director of a national women's legislative organization for another ten years, and then “retired” to become a full-time volunteer in the UM Church of the Resurrection and Kansas East Annual Conference. I have been privileged to use my experience as a legislator and administrator in a variety of ministries within the United Methodist church, including youth protection/child abuse and women's ministries.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Fun and enjoyment for me is volunteering for the Lord, specifically in missions. Travel has always been part of our married life, as Myron was a Vice President of a pharmaceutical company with international responsibilities. I love to travel and learn new things about cultures and people.

I also like to read and write but since Jason's death it has been difficult to concentrate on writing. Now with grandchildren fun and enjoyment is being the best "Nana" I can be.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Passionate, activist, visionary

What annoys you most - and why? People who are not honest about how they really feel and are critical of anyone who disagrees or debates or offers constructive criticism within the church . . . "because Christians should not disagree." (I remember the first time I was the only NO vote at a church council meeting . . . I felt the stares of every person around the table as they told me no one ever voted No before. I broke that mold!)

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? In 1997-98 I was in Russia and Africa. Both countries had experienced major changes in their governments. To be at different ends of the world and witnessing such differences in histories, geography and culture was amazing to me. It changed my life as I realized that modern advances in travel and technology brought the world much closer together. I truly understood what it meant to be "brothers and sisters in Christ" and the impact of a connectional church.

What has been your favorite vacation? As a family we have traveled nationally and internationally quite a bit, but perhaps the most memorable vacation we took was to Australia when our sons were young. They became seasoned travelers and culturally aware of differences in the world at a young age which helped shape their lives. But in reality a "favorite" vacation is probably the last one taken.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? I am an avid reader and yet there is no one book that I could name, but I do have favorite authors I enjoy reading, i.e., Henry Nouwan, Leonard Sweet, Richard Foster. (Oops, Bishop Jones and Adam Hamilton too!)

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? I travel to Africa frequently and have watched the changes in South Africa since Apartheid. I have been inspired by Nelson Mandela's "Long Walk to Freedom," and by the recent movie *Invictus* which shows how forgiveness can change the future of a nation.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? My mother, who trusted God to care for her and her family despite many tragedies in her life. She set a wonderful example of faith, hope and love.

What is your favorite food? Artichokes and Avocados

What legacy would you like to leave? That I was a servant of God who strived to do His will, making the best decisions that I could with the knowledge and understanding I had at that time, that I gave more to the world than I took and left it in a better place, that I acted justly, loved mercy and walked humbly with my God . . . and when I heard His call I strived to faithfully say "Here I am, Lord." And, of course, that I was a good and kind person in all roles throughout my life.

Bob Cox

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I am married to Sheryl. We have been married 43 years and have two daughters. Jennifer Collins, married to John Collins, is a United Methodist Elder, as is her husband.

They both serve the Coffeyville First United Methodist Church in Kansas East. They have one daughter, Elizabeth who is in second grade. Shelly Petz, married to Dustin Petz is also a United Methodist Elder, as is her husband. They both serve the Goodland United Methodist Church in Kansas West. They have one daughter, Shaylin who is 18 months old.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I was in general pediatrics practice in Hays, Kansas for many years followed by work in hospital administration. My work passion became Telemedicine. I initiated Telemedicine work in Kansas in 1988. In the church my focus has been serving on the Board of Trustees at Saint Paul School of Theology; serving on Health, Wellness and Clergy Health committees in the Kansas Area; and as a long time Lay Delegate from our local church to Annual Conference.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Visit our grandchildren. Spend time at our mountain cabin in Westcliffe, Colorado. Collect medical texts written between 1800 and 1900

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Introverted Listener Visionary

What annoys you most - and why? I am not generally annoyed by much. There isn't enough time to spend being annoyed.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Nothing But Nets - The United Methodist Church is working with other, secular, leadership organizations making a significant impact on the health of children and others.

What has been your favorite vacation? Alaskan cruise for our 40th wedding anniversary with our family and friends

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The Shack - Delightful yet tragic narrative that visions God differently, giving freedom to think differently.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Gandhi - One person stubbornly holding on to what is right

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Our kids who are such a delight with their insight and leadership. The Atlanta firefighters and volunteers who caught me when I fell from the 10th floor of the burning Winecoff Hotel in 1946; a fire that took the life of 115 persons including my parents. My dad who held me when we fell.

What is your favorite food? Pancakes and sausage

What legacy would you like to leave? Father of Telemedicine in Kansas. Father of two daughters. Husband of Sheryl

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Single individual . . . no children or pets. With 40+ years of teaching, many students are like family to me.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Teaching and learning about: 1) financial management practices and 2) other cultures and 3) reaching out in service to others

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Travel, reading, cooking, walking for exercise, and exploring nature

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Relator, Learner, Responsible

What annoys you most - and why? When persons believe that their perspective is the only one and thus they are not even willing to listen to the ideas and perspectives of others.

Why: I think that the most effective problem solving comes from taking the best ideas of everyone, melding them into possibilities that were not even thought possible with just the perspective of one individual.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Kusayapu Agricultural Institute in the village of Pachica, in Northern Chili

What has been your favorite vacation? A 3-week trip to Italy spending time in Milan, Roman, Florence and Venice

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The Book of Awakening by Mark Nepo.....The by-line says it all....”Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You have

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? The Blind-Side—It exemplifies the best of humanity that crosses economic and racial boundaries. It reveals the impact of one family in making a difference in the life of an individual that will have a positive influence for generations to come.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? My Father—a role model for me of a kind, fun-loving, gentle person with a strong work ethic—who never met a stranger for whom he wouldn’t give the shirt off his back.

What is your favorite food? Anything chocolate

What legacy would you like to leave? Promote increased cultural understanding through scholarships for local, national, and international study and mission work.

Rev. Matthew E. Fowler

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I've been married for 5 years to Sarah Fowler. We have one 16 month old named Noah James.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I love music and I am passionate about multiethnic and diverse ministry.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? I enjoy spending time with my family, playing guitar and piano, photography, reading, and travel.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Intentional, authentic, and thoughtful.

What annoys you most - and why? I am terribly annoyed at myself when I cannot find something because I didn't put it in its home. I am also annoyed when people are unwilling to directly talk to one another about issues, problems, or concerns in a truthful, honest, and generous way.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? I recently went on a friendship mission trip to Chile with my wife and mother.

We experienced such wonderful Christian hospitality from the families of our friends. I also learned more about the spread of Wesleyanism to South America (though I have much more to learn).

What has been your favorite vacation? Going to Yellowstone with my mother when I was young is near the top. Our Chile trip is also up there. Finally, I always love going to Chicago to visit friends.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The Hauerwas Reader has been inspirational and thought provoking, because it covers so many areas of Christian life and offers a consistent interpretive lens on how to be a faithful Christian community after Christendom.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? I don't know that this is a very good answer since the main character is a robot, but I recently watched Wall-E and loved it. Near the end, one of the humans has a stewardship epiphany: the earth just needs someone to take care of it. Then he reroutes the ship and heads back to earth to get to work.

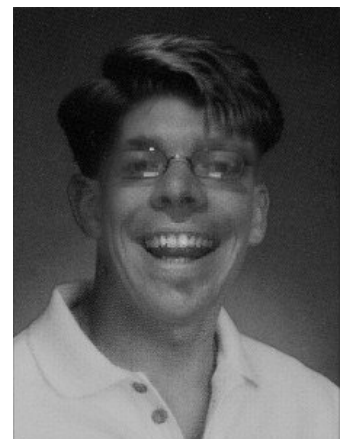
Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? I'm really not one who thinks in these terms, but my grandfather, more and more as I get older, is a great witness for the Christian life lived well, as a servant, a leader, a father, and a friend.

What is your favorite food? I love Mexican and Thai food.

What legacy would you like to leave? With God's help, I hope our son will be a legacy, that he will grow to be a faithful, Christian man witnessing to the present and future kingdom of God

Corey Godbey

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? My wife, Marina (who is Mexican) and I were married in Nueva Rosita, Mexico in 2001. Our oldest son, Caleb (7) was born in Dodge City, KS and our youngest, Melissa (3) was born in Saltillo, Mexico. We have a 5 foot pet orchid.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Facilitating Discovery - whether at home or in ministry. I love to help others discover their potential and realize their purpose in Christ.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Reading, Rock-Climb/Canyoneering, playing Wii with my son, Gardening

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Optimistic, Creative, Process-Oriented

What annoys you most - and why? Meetings that don't put people before tasks. (...and, 4 Way Stops)

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Even after living in Mexico for 8 years, I am now experiencing new heart-moving mission experiences here in Kansas. I am constantly amazed at the ministry that is happening in Hispanic Ministry right here in our "backyards". Faith and Spirit filled, inadequately-trained LAY LEADERS, many times living under poverty level, that God is using to inject new life into our communities!

What has been your favorite vacation? Vacationed together with good friends to Cancun (while living in Mx) in 2003. Good memories!

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? "Failing Forward" - John Maxwell (faith-based?) - has helped me understand that failure is necessary, and that I need to take more risks if I aspire to reach greater heights.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? "The Invisible Chapel" is a documentary that follows the story of a mission in a migrant camp in southern California. (www.invisiblechapel.com)

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Ignacio "Nacho" Libre. Even fools can break the mold and inspire others to change!

What is your favorite food? Taquitos that my wife makes!... or... Pozole that my mother-in-law makes!

What legacy would you like to leave? I long to discover and develop life-sharing mentor-mentee relationships. Before "I go" I hope to have walked and talked on both sides of this relationship in each stage of my life. (2 Tim. 2:2) I long to be a part of a movement of authentic Hispanic Ministries in the USA that brings new "fire" to the UMC. well through every facet of his life.

Oliver Green – Lay Leader

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)?

Johne' and I have two grown daughters: Jamie (finishing her BA at UMKC seeking to go to Dental School) and Naomi (pursing a Masters in English at KU); one brilliant and lovely granddaughter Alora, (kindergartner) who each have a dog. And they all currently live with us.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? Social justice

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Enjoying playing golf.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Patience, respect for diversity, servanthood

What annoys you most - and why? When people are not open to various ideas and perspectives. I was always taught there is more than one way to skin a cat (hopefully I will not get into trouble with the ASPCA for saying that).

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? The AIDS ministry is close to my heart serving on the UMC Global AIDS Committee, Thus world health is a significant issue for me. My most memorable experience was visiting a refugee camp in Danli, Honduras during the war in Nicaragua.

What has been your favorite vacation? Golfing with my older brother in Hawaii.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? A Man Called Peter which I read when I was twelve or thirteen.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? "Cabin in the Sky" - personal conflict of good vs. evil.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? My mother who raised three boys after my father died. All of whom finished college, two with Masters Degrees the other one finished the course work but never completed his thesis work. (Each of us went to Kansas Wesleyan and two received degrees from KWU)

What is your favorite food? A good salad.

What legacy would you like to leave? Christian servanthood

Rev. Brian Kottas

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? My wife, Jeanne, and I have two sons – Adam 36 (wife Be', children James, 13 and Addison,4) and Matt 33 (wife Danielle, child on the way). My dad, 91 lives with my sister and her husband in Grand Island, Ne.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I am currently serving as a District Superintendent. My passion is teaching and helping people grow in the faith. Before going into the ministry I worked as a research psychologist and taught part-time at the University of Kentucky at Fort Knox.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? I enjoy music, watching sports (primarily college football and baseball), reading and watching movies.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Patient, thoughtful; I enjoy humor.

What annoys you most - and why? I believe it is not only when people are not open, but become angry and abusive toward people with whom they disagree. My most uncomfortable and painful situations in the church are when people who claim to be Christians act that way.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? My favorite mission experience was working in New Orleans on a VIM trip after Hurricane Katrina.

What has been your favorite vacation? My favorite vacation was a week in Hawaii for our younger son's wedding.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The most recent has been The Shack, because of the image of God it communicated and the theological dialogue.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? The most recent would be Gran Torino with Clint Eastwood. Most of us have known some more or less crusty person who demonstrated the love of Christ to us. I believe that the goodness of humanity shows best in horrible circumstances.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Other than Jesus, my dad has been the greatest inspiration for my life, though most would not call him a hero. His patience through the years and faithfulness in caring for my mother through her Alzheimer's was heroic to me.

What is your favorite food? Prime rib.

What legacy would you like to leave? That I helped someone to know Jesus and/or know Jesus better.

Rev. David Livingston

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? Married to Tracy for 9 years. 2 children, Sophia 4 and Abby 2. A cat Theo. Another cat Tom had to be put to sleep this last year. Tracy and I met through a mutual friend while I was in seminary and married the fall after graduation.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I treasure time with my family, both immediate and extended. I'm in my tenth year as a full time pastor and fourth year at Burlington. I am passionate about revitalizing and renewing existing churches.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Spending time with family, reading, playing fantasy football, just started learning to play piano again after 25 years off.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Listener, patient, easy going

What annoys you most - and why? Driving behind the slowest driver on the road and driving in front of the fastest driver on the road. Why does that always happen to me?

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? The most significant was the first one I was on, when I was in seventh grade. I came from a pretty privileged area and had never seen people living in such a condition. It deeply affected me.

What has been your favorite vacation? I'll name two - 1) Growing up my family took a trip to Washington D.C. We saw all the sights and saw part of a session of the House. I was fascinated and have been interested in politics ever since. 2) With Tracy, a cruise about 6 years ago. We thought it would be the last vacation before kids and we just had a great time together.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? The Ragamuffin Gospel by Brennan Manning. I love the theme of God's gracious love being given to imperfect misfits.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Pay it Forward. Shows how good people can be but also shows that there can be a cost - a sacrificial element - to that goodness.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Rich Mullins – singer/songwriter who more than anyone else in that industry lived out what he believed.

What is your favorite food? pizza

What legacy would you like to leave? I hope that when I am gone people will be able to say "he really believed what he said and practiced what he preached." That would mean we would follow the teachings of Jesus more closely in our daily lives and that we would daily try to grow more in love with God and each other.

Rev. Janet Maxwell

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)?

I am at home in Parsons, KS with my cat, Kira. My mother lives in Lawrence, and my brother and his family live in Wichita.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I don't suppose this means hot tea and chocolate, although they are passions I enjoy. My profession is serving as the Parsons District Superintendent in the Kansas East Conference. Some of my passions are: connecting in community; leadership development; outreach to those in need.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Conversation and meals with friends; flower gardening; going to civic theatre or music concerts.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Caring/encouraging; compassionate; listen and ask questions.

What annoys you most - and why?

~~ - when people are not open to various ideas and perspectives

~~ An open mind and heart, an inclusive spirit, respect, and open communication are values for me, as well as looking at the big picture and the various possibilities.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? Appalachia Service Project has a warm spot in my heart since I worked on staff with this UM mission for two summers and have led several teams to ASP; and a mission trip to Guatemala was a moving experience for me.

What has been your favorite vacation? A study trip/vacation for a seminar retreat on the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in Chartres, France.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? Lately, Three Simple Rules by Reuben P. Job. Personally and professionally I seek to live our faith in a way that appreciates and explores the deep meanings; and communicates in simple, yet direct, language so that people in a variety of life circumstances may experience God's love and grace in the midst of the complexities of our world.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? "Babette's Feast", for the spirit of generosity and community.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Ann Eaton, my childhood church choir director, who was one of the first to teach me to pray for those in need.

What is your favorite food? Ice cream.

What legacy would you like to leave? I wrote this motto for myself when I began my service as a D.S. I would be glad to have it as a legacy. *Live, Love, Listen, Learn, Lead....Live each day to the fullest. Love others with compassion and caring. Listen with an open mind and heart. Learn and grow in new ways. Lead with God's grace and spirit, to connect, equip and transform.*

Rev. Debra McKnight

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I am single and enjoying a family of choice created out of strong friendships with folks in Omaha, as well as enjoying the close proximity I have to my parents, one of my brothers, Doug who is a dentist working with my Dad and raising three children with his wife, Michelle. I am grateful to visit the folks I miss in Dallas as well as my beloved youngest brother, Greg who works as an Engineer in Seattle.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I enjoy photography, as my own way of exploring the world but also as a way of looking through someone else's eyes and try to visit galleries where ever I roam.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? I spend time chatting and talking with close friends, playing with my nieces and nephew and to be honest, shoe shopping.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Creative, relational, sensitive

What annoys you most - and why? When people are not open to new ideas and perspectives makes me very aware of the fear and brokenness people carry in their lives and how that limits all of our possibilities.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? My time in a Jamaican Medical mission opened my world as a high school student to systemic injustice, the global nature of my church and taught me I did not want to be a dentist after all.

What has been your favorite vacation? Hawaii to perform a wedding for my friends and learn about indigenous spirituality and religion.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? *In Her Own Rite* by Marjorie Procter-Smith for naming past wounds, claiming past gifts and imagining a new future for the church inspired my journey.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Big Fish offers vivid images that illuminate life and explore the humanity seeded with in us, the man behind the myth, the truth that rests in the stories of our lives and invites us to live so vividly into our future.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? My Dad for his hard work, dedication, and compassion.

What is your favorite food? Mom's brisket.

What legacy would you like to leave? To be a part of liturgical and structural renewal that mattered in the lives of people and inspired us to be a better church together that could have mature, multi-dimensional conversations about the difficult spaces in the world and inspires change.

Rev. Jan Todd

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)?

I am married to Rev. Mitch Todd, we are proud parents of an Australian Shepherd/Lab Mix named Charlie. He celebrates his fourth birthday in January.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I am passionate about transforming the world with the love of Jesus Christ and pointing people toward the experience of God in their lives. I like to use a variety of approaches - whatever works to invite people to know this amazing grace and life giving power that God has given in Jesus. I like to champion concepts and ideas that challenge us to live as people who are awed by the potential and gifts each human and creature possesses. I like it when people act like the "kingdom" is before them (although I struggle with the word *kingdom*). I am a feminist/liberationists/evangelical/liberal who sometimes lands on the conservative side. I try to be a person who doesn't force any of that onto others lives - I just live it out to the best of my ability and hope that it is Christ that people see - not my choices only.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? Trailing with my dog, playing Rock the band on Wii with Mitch (love the drums!), reading more books than I can finish, getting coffee with people and learning about their lives, singing and writing music, seeing movies (LOVED Avatar!) and I love being with my husband - we have a blast together:)

Name three personality traits that best describe you.

- Aiming for grace in all things
- High, high, high expectations - grounded, however, with love and understanding
- Philanthropist - I'm a lover of people and I get so interested in human life from many perspectives

What annoys you most - and why? I don't like it when people are not willing to make a decision. I know that it is difficult sometimes, and decisions need discernment. I do think that good deadlines and voting helps. I also believe that people should vote based on what they really feel and think is true. Most important decisions require prayer, although not all decisions require it. I find that praying over every decision can slow down the spirit of the group even though I believe that the Spirit at all times is willing to help.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? WOW - I really like mission - have been on over 20 mission trips. Recently, our church went Chapman, Kansas after a Tornado devastated the town. Gutting, roofing, dry walling - I love it all. But most of all, I love getting to know and serve the families who need to feel loved and cared for. When we work together on getting their lives back on track - there's no greater feeling. I glean so much from each mission experience - gaining knowledge of God's world through the stories of the people I get to encounter on those missions. I also get a kick out of how each mission team is different. I've worked with teens, college students and a whole teams over the age of 65. All were different, all a blessing.

What has been your favorite vacation? Jamaica - definitely - still dream of it.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? I know that she can be a bit light in reading - but I just read Marianne Williamson's Everyday Grace. I tend to read heady books a lot and it was really nice to look forward to her words of grace. I also read Henri Nouwen recently- I think I'm in a bit of a mystical mood right now. I go through phases. Also reading David Tracy and Richard J. Foster.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? Avatar - loved it - see it in Imax 3D if possible. Fun note - a member of our church is a compositor and worked on the CGI. If you see it I'll tell you which parts as not to spoil it :)

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? Sounds cliché - my mom and dad. They keep learning and growing in faith and never stop living their faith. My dad has an old Methodist prayer book from the 1800's - we have more theological discussions that can last for hours. My mom is always challenging the church to "think outside the box". They retired in South Texas and moved from a large church (Derby, Woodlawn) to a small church of snowbirds and those who had retired. They hadn't had VBS in years because they "had no children in church". Mom said "but we have children in the community" -who were mostly Hispanic. They held a VBS with 25 children that year. My mom and dad keep living their faith and it inspires me every day.

What is your favorite food? Middle Eastern food - Greek too! I love dolmas, hummus, chicken schwarma....makin' me hungry!

What legacy would you like to leave? For churches and people to learn what transforming grace can do in their lives. Not just receiving grace, but responding to it. In terms of the church - Sanctification realized:)

Tom Watson

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Tell us about your family (marital status, spouse's name, children, names/ages, pets, etc.)? I am married, my wife's name is Linda. We have one grown son, Jay Watson, who lives in Tempe, Arizona. We have no pets at present, our Beagle of 16 years died about 2 years ago and we opted not to replace her at this time.

What is your passion and profession (inside or outside the church)? I am an attorney in Kearney, Nebraska. I work primarily in three areas, Workers' Compensation, Social Security Disability, and tax planning and preparation. My passion within the church is for Biblical literacy and evangelism.

What do you do for fun and enjoyment when you are not serving in ministry? For fun, I play golf, and do so as many weekends as I can in good weather. I also enjoy reading, but do a lot of that professionally.

Name three personality traits that best describe you. Patient, Optimistic, Facilitator/
Summarizer

Things that annoy me: When people are too unfocused. By that I mean when people take the discussion into areas that do not seem relevant. I realize this is my judgment about relevancy. Further, when people use 100 words to say what could easily be said in 10. Also, I find myself somewhat annoyed by the mis-use of words, particularly “imply” and “infer”; and “affect” and “effect”. Just a quirk of mine.

What has been your favorite mission experience or what United Methodist Mission touches your heart most? My favorite mission experience was a VIM experience with a team from our church in Kearney, Nebraska to Nueva Laredo for a week. This occurred when our son was still small, about 3rd grade, we lived with a family of the congregation for that week, and worked on an addition to their church for Sunday School classes.

What has been your favorite vacation? My favorite vacation is probably a trip that Linda and I took in October of 2008 to Eastern Europe for 17 days. We traveled with a group and visited the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

What faith based book has been inspirational to you and why? For years I have enjoyed the writings of C. S. Lewis and particularly “Mere Christianity” and “The Great Divorce”. When our son was little, we read the Chronicles of Narnia every night before bed.

What movie would you recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity? Why? I really don’t know what movie I would recommend to a person who wanted to be inspired by the goodness of humanity. I am not much of a movie person and haven’t actually attended a movie in years, but have watched movies run on TV. A movie that I have enjoyed numerous times and which, in my opinion would fall into this category, would be “City Slickers”. It is about fresh starts and “do-overs”.

Who is the hero/heroine that has been an inspiration for your life? I don’t know that I can answer that question directly. The word “the”, limits it to one person and I can’t do that. I really don’t identify anyone that I have considered the inspiration for my life. If the question relates to the person(s) that have been most influential in my life, there are six. My mother; my paternal grandfather; the farm neighbor I worked for after my father’s death; two aunts; and my college advisor, Clayton Yeutter.

What is your favorite food? I really like almost all food, except liver. However, a favorite of mine is ham and navy bean soup with cornbread.

What legacy would you like to leave? I would like persons to have a desire to study the Scriptures, not just read them. To make inquiry into what the words they read mean in order to have understanding.

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