

TOM AMICK

Member since 1977

Background

Place of Birth:

Windber, PA

Did You Know?

Tom's childhood doctor was Shari Ewing's father, Dr. Joseph Knisley.

Tom has traveled extensively. He has flown shotgun over the Alaskan Range in a float plane, gone whale-watching off the coast of Prince Edwards Island, crossed the Highlands of Scotland, searched Loch Ness for its famed monster, and seen the Crown Jewels in England in all their splendor. He hopes to take his next trip to Ireland.

Favorite Hymns:

Onward, Christian
Soldiers

Holy, Holy, Holy



Tom grew up on a 175-acre farm in Bedford, PA, with his parents and younger brother. He remembers the farm requiring a lot of hard work. He helped his family tend the garden, harvest hay, feed and care for the animals, and maintain the orchard.

Whenever the family had time available, they enjoyed traveling around the country. Between these trips with his parents and others with his aunt and uncle, Tom and his brother saw most of the continental United States. On one of the trips with his aunt and uncle, Tom noticed the college students working in Yellowstone National Park and became inspired to be one of them. That year he went through the application process, which included contacting his state representative, and was rewarded with a job in Yellowstone during the summer of 1957. Six days a week, he worked as a floor and supply boy in the cafeteria at the West Thumb campground. He spent his Sundays off, hitchhiking around the park, toting the family's 8 mm camera. He captured footage which he would later use to create a travelogue. Near the end of the summer, when the campground closed, Tom was transferred to work out the remainder of his contract at the Old Faithful cafeteria.

After graduating from Lycoming College with a degree in Biology and Medical Technology, Tom worked for several years in Williamsport, PA, before moving to Chambersburg, where he worked in the

Chambersburg Hospital for 26 years and later for Omega Medical Labs until his retirement.

While Tom felt useful and competent at his job, he believes that his most purposeful work has been in music and drama. He has been singing in the church choir since his childhood at Bedford Methodist Church. And here at FUMC, over the last forty-four years, Tom has sung under three directors: Charles Ferris, Tom Guthrie, and our very own Linda Peppernick.

Yet, his greatest passion is drama. Tom has participated in over one hundred plays in various roles. He began as an actor, dancing with Molly Messner in his first on-stage performance. Later, in 1985, he was approached by two of the community theater directors, who asked him to consider directing his own show. Tom remembers feeling hesitant, unsure that he would be able to do the job. But he took that initial step out, and has never looked back.

When not directing shows, Tom can often be found assisting with the stage and lighting in others. Tom says that he refers to his plays as his children, because he puts his heart and soul into them. He most enjoys directing mysteries but has also done comedies and musicals along the way. I ask him for the name of his all-time favorite show; his response is, "All of them. I love all of them. My favorite is whichever one I am currently working on."

As Tom talks about his 'children,' enthusiasm radiates off of him. It reminds me of a quote I've run across a couple of times, attributed to the second century bishop, Irenaeus of Lyons, who said, "The glory of God is man fully alive." It's a beautiful thing. We bring glory to God when we live authentically as the people He created us to be.

Perhaps Tom has been able to live authentically because he has felt the presence and love of God throughout his life. He says that, growing up, it was never a question of whether or not he would attend church. His dad's attitude was, "You're going to church. No ifs, ands, or buts about it." Thus, in addition to his family, Tom always had the support of the faith community. He specifically remembers the choir director and organist at Bedford Methodist being influential people in his life. And he also remembers the influence of his counselors at Newton Hamilton, a church camp he attended during the summers. More recently, Tom remembers feeling the support of the faith community as he went through the difficult experience of losing his parents.

Tom also remembers a time when God showed up for him through a complete stranger. It was during the summer he spent working at Yellowstone. One Sunday he was out hiking in the vicinity of the Yellowstone Grand Canyon when a bear suddenly appeared and stopped directly in his path. Tom said he froze and began considering his options. But then a car came down the road, and the man inside offered him a ride past the bear. It was the same man Tom had helped take a picture in front of the falls earlier that day.

Tom's advice to younger generations is to trust in God and to join a church:

"We all have our ups and downs and need help along the way. I'm glad that I followed my parents' advice and became involved in the church. It is what has kept me on track. It's a relationship with God and the church that has sustained me."