

WHBC to present *Mama Emile: The Story of a Missionary's Life*

Mama Emile, a readers' theater production on the life of missionary Emily Keyes will be presented at West Henrietta Baptist Church this Mother's Day, May 10. Eighteen readers will tell the story of Emily's life as she wrote it in poems and letters across six decades. The presentation will begin during 10 a.m. worship and is expected to extend the service to about 11:30.

Emily was the last representative of the founding family that served the longest at WHBC. She was born a farm girl who, growing up during the Great Depression, heard Christ's call to distant lands. She spent 40 years as Mama Emile, teaching in the Belgian Congo, which became Zaire during her tenure. The depth of her determination to serve was unknown until after her death at 88, on Oct. 19, 2014, when her friend and caretaker, Leanna Shirley, found her poems and letters.

Emily's writings reveal a deeply spiritual woman who knew more disappointment than anyone might have guessed, and who survived on prayer, humor, and an unflappable gratitude that counted her blessings and not her losses. She chose the comfort of Christ over loneliness and prayed to love well. Her inspiring story effectively calls others to the rich abundance of Christian service.

So come meet the Emily no one fully knew during her 24 retirement years back in her childhood church, the Emily who brimmed with excitements on the Queen Elizabeth at 24, who walked away from love and marriage, who loved moonrises through palm trees, and who never stopped trying to get the Christian life right.

Refreshments will be served following the presentation. A book of Emily's writings compiled by WHBC Historian Bonnie Healy will be available. Cost is \$10. It is also available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

West Henrietta Baptist Church is located on the northeast corner of West Henrietta and Erie Station roads in West Henrietta. Parking is available in the firemen's lot behind the church.



All dressed up, Emily, at 24 in 1951, is pictured onboard the Queen Elizabeth as she headed to Belgium for a year's training before going to the Belgian Congo.