



Dear East Woods Family and Friends,

Welcome to February! Because it's the second month of 2016, and it's a month celebrating both history (President's Day) and love (St. Valentine's Day), here's a cover letter reflection on a powerful story that includes all three of those themes: seconds, history, and love.

Genesis 35 recalls the story of the birth of Jacob and Rachel's second son. His birth was the answer to the prayer Rachel had prayed immediately after the birth of her first son, Joseph: "May the Lord add to me another son!" (Genesis 30:24). Tragically, the Lord chose to answer Rachel's prayer with an unforeseen consequence. Rachel died during that second delivery. As she was dying, she named her second son Ben-oni, which in Hebrew means 'son of my sorrow'.

The sorrow was there for Jacob, too. Jacob had loved Rachel more than anyone or anything else in the world. So, as he received his newborn son and the news of the death of his beloved wife, he had every right to keep the name Rachel had chosen for Ben-oni. But, the Bible tells us that Jacob chose a different identity for his child. He renamed him Benjamin, which means 'son of the right hand' or 'son of blessing'.

Just three chapters earlier in Genesis, Jacob had experienced the power of being renamed by his heavenly Father. After wrestling with God, Jacob's identity had been changed from 'supplanter' (Jacob) to 'the one who strives with God' (Israel). A negative had been changed to a positive because of divine vision. And so, Jacob chose to enact his naming rights with his newborn son and to forever change his identity from a negative (son of sorrow) to a positive (son of blessing).

Pastor Steven Furtick reminds us in his reflection on this passage that God's desire is for us to bear the name and identity of His love. God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave him the name that is above all names (Philippians 2), and God has offered us the chance to be known by that same name. Though you may have chosen for a long time to carry an identity born of sorrow, rather than the one the Father has given you in Christ, you have the joyful privilege of taking on that blessed name. We also have the privilege of allowing God to rename our sorrows and turn them into strong blessings. When tragedy strikes our lives, like it did Rachel and Jacob's, we can choose to trust God's promise that He will work that tragedy toward good and bless us with the results, if we are open to loving and trusting Him. Thanks to God's work in Christ, you have that power. You have naming rights.

That's my hope for you in February. That God will take the sorrows of your past and second chances of your present and use them as future sources of strength and blessing. In His grace, the Lord has connected us to the name that is above all names. May you receive it for your joy and His glory.

In Christ~ Bill

JANUARY 2016 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Tom Koecher, Elder of Finance, reported that all signs point to a **financial surplus of roughly \$1,500 for year-end 2015**. Final 2015 numbers were presented to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 31, at 12 PM. At that same meeting, Session presented its approved 2016 budget, which represents a roughly 7.5% increase over the 2015 budget.

- Pastor Bill presented his updated worship service and sermon schedule for 2016 along with his schedule for chaplaincy-related absences. The focus of the conversation was on the process for **identifying and providing leadership during the 8-week time frame from May 9-July 10** when Bill will be attending Chaplain School.
- Session **welcomed seven new members on Sunday, January 24**, introduced to the congregation during the 10:30 worship service. Members of Session will connect with new members from this class and previous classes to learn more about why they've chosen to join East Woods and how they believe we can continue to grow the congregation.
- During 2016, Session will consider revising the current **Session configuration and Elder roles to ensure that fellowship and congregational care opportunities are provided**. This will include the addition of Deacons to our care-giving leadership along with the possibility of an Elder coordinating community or fellowship events. The first group of East Woods Deacons will likely be ordained during July, once Pastor Bill has returned from Chaplain School.
- Session continued to discuss the proposal from Worship Commission to adjust the Sunday morning schedule for the purpose of adding a protected period between services for fellowship, small groups, Gathering Sunday brunches, Bible study classes, and special events such as ordinations and baptisms. **The current proposal would shift the first service to 8:30-9:30 and the second service to 10:45-noon**, allowing a 45-minute time for gathering from 9:45-10:30 AM. If supported and approved, the transition would likely take place starting September 11, 2016.
- Session discussed and **approved the continuation of a collection of offerings during the Christmas Eve worship services**.



FAMILY MINISTRIES

CHILDREN

Children's Choir!

Our first scheduled children's choir practice was thwarted by the snowstorm in the beginning of January, but we shall prevail! Our NEW first practice is scheduled for February 7th, during the regular Sunday School hour – which means we'll be performing for the first time on Valentines day – Sunday, February 14th!

Sunday School Volunteer Sign up!

You might have noticed in the Children's wing, that there is a colorful sign-up calendar posted on the wall. This is the new system for scheduling Sunday School teachers and Second Adults. It is as simple as it seems: find a time that is available, and write down your name! If you've never volunteered before, feel free to talk to Hailey Vandewiele or Tim Martinez to find out about joining the Family Ministries Team! (see contact information below)



YOUTH

Youth group has been suffering through a transition in Music leadership, as I (Hailey Vandewiele) have stepped into the role of Worship Leader this past month. I use the word “suffering” mostly in jest, because in truth, it has been a huge blessing for me to have the opportunity to share music with this group each Wednesday night. We have been singing all kinds of Worship tunes from “10,000 Reasons” by Matt Redman, to “Amazing Grace”, to “Oceans” by Hillsong United – and what better way to draw closer to God than through prayerful song! I look forward to it every week.

Stakeholders Meeting!

Families, and Teachers, note that at the end of February we will be holding our quarterly meeting! This will be held on February 28th, following the 10:30 Sunday Morning Service. There will be snacks as well as information, and discussion surrounding curriculum, upcoming events, and new ideas! We love to hear from you, and hope to see you there.

I hope you all have a blessed February,

Hailey Vandewiele – Hailey@eastwoodspress.org

Tim Martinez – Tmartinez0408@gmail.com

Heaven's Window

by Arla Olsen

*The Glory of God radiates from vistas of heavenly light
where the majesty of angels and glory are seen...*

*Through Heaven's window, He can look down to earth
and see His people who are struggling and sad,
as they make their way through turbulent times
where violent things happen, and people get mad...*

*He sees fighting, and hatred, of mankind
in cities near and far, people not caring,
the agony of families whose loved ones are lost,
in personal, and other countries' angry wars...*

*He sees the fear in people's eyes,
as they don't know what will happen next,
and meaningless things that assail their minds
increase as joyfulness fades, with no relief.*

*He is sad when He sees people dishonor Him,
but, for those who truly trust and believe,
He sees the love and kindness in their hearts, too,
for they know, as they worship, praise and pray to Him,
if you "draw near to God, He will draw near to you"...*

NEW MEMBERS
Welcomed on January 24



Kirk Pickering
and Lisa Melo



Andrew Bither



Tim and Heather Riley



Matt and Katherine Yahvah

MISSION

NEWS FROM THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER AT MILL PLAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Fifty families received complete holiday dinners and boxes with two weeks' worth of food (for a family of 6) before the Thanksgiving break from school with the help of EWPC and others. One hundred fifty-four students and siblings received gifts for Christmas.

NEED FOR HOUSEHOLD ITEMS: With families moving from living in their cars to living in homes, there is a need for: pillows, alarm clocks, toilet paper, etc. Since the SNAP program does not include toiletries and soap, deodorant and unscented Arm & Hammer Detergent are also needed.

SHARE HOUSE SERVES THE HUNGRY AND HOMELESS in the Vancouver area. For the month of February, we would like to highlight some of their specific personal hygiene needs: Bath towels, wash cloths, shampoo and conditioner, hand soaps, brush, comb, nail clippers, toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, band-aids, Kleenex, feminine hygiene products and toilet paper. Please feel free to share what you can. For your convenience, we have a collection bin for Share House in Evergreen Hall (narthex). Thank you!!

WARM COMFORT The East Woods Shawl Ministry made and gave away **215** warm and cozy shawls in 2015. The group meets to knit and crochet on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 1 pm in the Redwood Room. For more information, contact **Judy England**, 601-7567.



NEWS FROM CARD MAKING: In 2015 Operation Write Home received **2,225** cards and AnyHero letters from EWPC and Soldiers' Angels received **230** cards to be sent overseas. The VA Hospital received **75** Christmas cards and 150 AnyVeteran cards for their hospitalized veterans. Operation Write Home is now closed. The total number of cards from EWPC from 2009 to 2015 is 30,494.

CARD MAKING MEETING IN FEBRUARY:

- **Wednesday, February 10** at 1 PM, at Ellen's apt. #115 at Brookdale, Vancouver Orchards, 10011 NE 118th Ave.
- **Monday, February 22**, 1 PM at Brookdale at Fisher's Landing, 17171 SE 22nd Dr., Vancouver. We will help the residents sign birthday cards for the residents with March birthdays and assemble blank greeting cards for Soldiers' Angels for deployed service members.



For more information, contact **Esther Ellis**, 891-0750.



EAST WOODS WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

8:30 to 10:00 AM

Join us on Saturday, February 27

LENT BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10. Pastor Bill invites you to receive personal prayer and the imposition of ashes in the East Woods Sanctuary between the times of 7:00-8:30 AM and 11:30 AM-1:00 PM. Then, at 6:30 PM, your Worship and Youth Commissions invite you to join us for a special evening honoring the rich traditions of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. We'll gather in Evergreen Hall for a traditional Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner, followed by a meaningful Ash Wednesday service of worship and reflection in the sanctuary.



SCRIP UPDATE: WE'RE BACK! The first Scrip/gift card order will be placed on **February 7th** (Gathering Sunday) and the cards will be here just in time for **Valentine's Day on February 14th** (Gift cards to one of the over 35 restaurants available through Scrip make a great gift). Did you know you can now pay for your order using your credit card? Just go to EWPC's website, click on "donate" and indicate it's for your Scrip order and write "Paid by Credit Card" on your order form. This program raised **over \$1,500** in 2015...can we reach \$2,000 this year? If you have any questions, please see **Linda Fortney** or **Lynne Helmke**.

Thank you for helping to make this program such a success!



March Newsletter deadline—Tuesday, February 16

Office hours: Tuesday 1-4 PM, Wednesday & Thursday 9 AM - 3 PM

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Presbyterian Church

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