

Welcome to July, dear Newsletter reader! I hope the summer months have started well for you.

In the weeks since my first drill weekend with the Navy, many of you have thoughtfully asked about the experience, and I've enjoyed sharing the stories. To offer a brief summary, I don't think I've ever felt so important and so ignorant in such equal parts at the same time. Amidst all of the people saluting me, addressing me as "Sir," and needing me as Chaplain, I'm not sure it could have been any more obvious that I have zero experience and history with the military. For one, I don't know the terminology. (I think there may be more acronyms than atoms on a Navy base!) For another, I haven't yet learned to recognize all of the ranks and ratings among personnel. (I spent the whole weekend calling a Lieutenant Commander "Captain," because I misread his insignia! I hope he felt more inspired than insulted.) Though I was senior in rank and age to the vast majority of those I encountered, I was definitely the most juvenile in many other ways.

The good news is that the weekend was filled with enrichment and great conversation. One of my favorite examples happened in my orientation class, which the Navy unapologetically calls Indoctrination. I sat next to a 28-year old woman who has been in the Navy since age 17. Since, like me, she was new to the Portland Operational Support Center and new to the Reserves, we found ourselves in the same class. As she tutored me in military language and culture, she heard a bit of my story and learned the reasons I'd chosen to join the Navy for the first time at age 41. In one of our last interactions for the weekend, she said, "I think it's really cool that you chose to join. I'd always thought of the Navy as a way *out*, mostly out of my family and some really bad circumstances. I never thought of it as a way *in*, in to something people would really *want* to do." I think she walked away with a greater sense of appreciation for the value of the Navy and the blessings provided to her.

I've come to see life in Christ with a similar sense of appreciation. For many, the choice to follow Jesus is seen as an escape from negative things – addictions, failures, broken relationships, loneliness, hell... you name it. Sometimes, faith in Christ is jokingly referred to as "fire insurance." That escape can be very real, and I believe it's an important part of what Christ came to offer. But, I also believe the life of Christian discipleship is meant to be so much more than just a way *out* of the negative.

In his letter to the Philippian Christians, the Apostle Paul reflected on his life as an accomplished Pharisee before coming to know Christ. He wrote,

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“Whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him...”

Being found in Christ has value that surpasses anything else that life in this world might offer or afford. The blessings of God are rich and real, going beyond escape from the negative, and filling our lives and our world with valuable gain both for the here and now and in the sweet by and by. July offers another month of experiencing the surpassing value of life in Christ together, and I hope you'll make time to enjoy the various outings, service projects, concerts, fellowship gatherings and worship opportunities being offered.

May the Lord bless you and keep you in Christ~ Bill



A Note from Pastor Bill about emergency care during Reserve training:

As you're now aware, my monthly drilling cycle with the Navy has begun. Thank you again for supporting this commission!

On most drill weekends, I will be unavailable from 8 AM– 4 PM Saturday and Sunday. I will serve at the Naval Reserve Center on Swan Island, so I expect to be home and available to respond to emergencies by 5 PM each day of reserve service.

Between now and the end of September here are my scheduled drill days:
July 11-12, August 8-9, September 19-20.

When I'm unavailable, Lynne Combs has offered to serve as our congregation's primary contact person. Thank you, Lynne! Lynne will then assess the need and connect with whomever else should be involved. In cases where an ordained pastor is needed, we're planning to look to Mickie Drummond and Al Johnston (recently retired minister and bereavement counselor who worships with the Columbia Pres. congregation). Al will preach at East Woods on July 12, so he will become a more familiar face to all of us.

In other cases, Lynne may suggest a connection with the appropriate Shepherd for flock-related care. Of course, if you would like to connect directly with your Shepherd first, that's a fine place to start.

The best phone numbers for reaching Lynne, Mickie, and Al are:

Lynne: [\(360\) 907-4748](tel:3609074748) Mickie: [\(360\) 601-5308](tel:3606015308) Al: [\(509\) 823-3808](tel:5098233808)

And, if you'd like to connect directly with me and are comfortable to wait until I'm able to respond, the best numbers for reaching me continue to be (818) 321-6157 and (360) 335-4682. Both numbers ring through to the same cell phone.

I will value your continued prayers as this new journey begins. May God's kingdom grow and God's glory and grace through Christ be revealed!

CHILDREN AND FAMILY



Vacation Bible School 2015 was all about “God’s Love In Action.” We served 60 children, from East Woods, neighbors who have become a regular part of VBS, and 6 brand new families.

As I roll off the East Woods paid staff I invite you to peek into the amazing ministry I share with our 50-plus VBS volunteers. In this outreach ministry educational professionals join forces with amazing middle school and high school youth. They inspire me and give me great joy.

As our experienced VBS youth and adult shepherds can tell you, being a VBS helper involves stepping into the role of the adult advisors. From the moment the first youngster arrives until the last youngster has left, VBS helpers put aside their own interests and take full responsibility for nurturing the children in their care. It’s part “herding cats” and part encouraging each child to try something new; to make a new friend and be part of a new fellowship. VBS helpers need to be the eyes, ears, hands and heart of God for these children.

It can be a LONG three hours. Volunteers go home exhausted. And they come back the next day ready to help deliver another fabulous VBS experience for the children. Helpers don’t need to be uber smart or clever. They need to be uber dedicated to The Lord and to this ministry. Every year our wonderful volunteers go about their work in a focused, responsible, sensitive, caring way, from the first moment to the last. Their devotion and energy is contagious. They are blessed to be a blessing. May it always be so.

Some of you have heard me say this, but it bears repeating. Every time I walk through the doors of East Woods, it’s a blessing. I came to you from a hard, sad staff circumstance (most church staffers have been there). From your first welcome of me in January 2009, the natural thing has been to look ahead and trust my skills and insights. You have encouraged and inspired me beyond anything I could imagine.

My prayer for everyone in “ministry” – paid or otherwise, is that the Holy Spirit will enfold you with the gracious hospitality of Christ, much as you have embraced me. Our future together will be awesome!!

Roberta Schlechter
Director of Children and Family Ministry

YOUTH GROUP

Greetings faithful readers,

The youth are live and active here at EWPC. June was filled to the brim and then over-flowed with events. We had a youth-led gathering Sunday, Graduation Sunday, End-of-school youth group party, VBS, and a Lock-In. Phew, it was a tiring month but we made it through the month and through the school year!

And the fun doesn't stop there. We are continuing right into July. July 1st the youth are invited to join the congregation for patriotic caroling around our community. But don't stay out too late, because July 2nd we are headed to Wild Waves!!! This is going to be a blast of an event and a great way to kick off the summer. If you survive Wild Waves, come back for Wednesday night Youth Group all summer long. We are theming it after Survivor, and we will have lots of fun challenges and exciting games. Hope to see you there!

Chase Van Epps

Upcoming Events

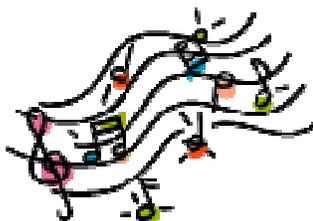
July 1st Community Caroling

July 2nd Wild Waves

CONCERTS ON THE YARD

Looking for an evening out with some local flavor? This summer, East Woods will host two great concerts to welcome our neighbors and feature our musical talent. Invite friends, family members, and neighbors. Pick up or pack up a great picnic dinner, and come on out to the East Yard for some great music and celebration of the sacred space God has given us.

Sunday, July 26, 6:30 PM – “1-6-5” An evening of Bluegrass, Pop and Praise with Rich Adamson, Jack Bloss, Carson Dunn, Brian Jones, Jack Mace, Bill Sperry and some special guests. One night, six guys, five decades-worth of great music!



Sunday, August 23, 6:30 PM – “Lewis River Dixie” An evening of fabulous Dixieland hot jazz, with East Woods' own Roger Castro, Carol Domench, and Jeff Kennedy. Grab some Creole or Cajun cuisine, and head on down to the Southeast Bayou of the East Woods East Yard!

MISSION

LEARN MORE ABOUT GUATEMALA AND CEDEPCA
WITH PCUSA MISSION CO-WORKER LESLIE VOGEL!

Leslie will visit East Woods on Thursday, July 9, 6:30-8:30 PM to share about her ministry at CEDEPCA and give more context to the upcoming Fall Intercultural Trip to Guatemala. Leslie is an intercultural encounters facilitator with CEDEPCA. She helps US visitors with immersion opportunities that enable them to work alongside Guatemalans and experience everyday life in the country.

Join us on **July 9, 6:30-8:30 PM**, in the Maple Room.
Light dinner will be available.

Visit Leslie's PCUSA website:

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/leslie-vogel/>



OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSION AID:

We will be collecting personal hygiene and non-perishable food items during the month of July to be donated to **The Lighthouse**, a residential home for homeless and street children in the Philippines. A container for the donations will be provided in Evergreen Hall (narthex).

Items needed are: Shampoos, soap, toothpaste, new underwear, socks, peanut butter, granola bars, oatmeal.

Questions? Please email Tess Castro at tesscastro1@yahoo.com.



HELP NEEDED AT MILL PLAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GARDEN.

As some of you may know, students at MPES have again planted a vegetable garden on school grounds. Many of the plants were started from seeds which the children planted and have been tending for the past few weeks. Hopefully, most of the veggies will be harvested when the students return to school in September. However, some help is needed while school is out for the summer. If you can spare some time and can help water the garden (maybe only once or twice), your help would be greatly appreciated. Please see or contact **Lynne Helmke**, 360-883-5651, if you can help in this way. Thank you!



JULY CARD-MAKING

- Second Tuesday, July 14, at 6 p.m. at Brookdale Vancouver Village, 10011 NE 118th Ave, in the Activity Room on the second floor.
- Third Monday, July 20, at 1 p.m. at Molly's Craft Shack, 11500 NE 76th St included a Lawn Fawn Catalog Party.
- Fourth Monday, July 27, at 1 p.m., at Brookdale at Fisher's Landing, 17171 SE 22nd Dr.



Questions? Email at cardmaking@eastwoodspres.org

JUNE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session welcomed our newly elected Ruling Elders: Tess Castro (Mission), Tom Koecher (Finance) and Chris Luck (Worship).

✦ Peggy McNees was welcomed as a guest representing the Communications Commission to speak about the current facility enhancement projects. Peggy reported that roughly \$2,600 has been raised in support of the installation of an electric door opener for the main entrance doors of Evergreen Hall. The installation is scheduled to take place on Thursday, June 18. Peggy led Session in a discussion about ongoing fundraising and congregational communication. She also asked Session for ideas about future project priorities and names of congregation members who should be involved in this process going forward.

✦ Shirley Lashley, Treasurer, reported that income surpassed spending in May and helped to reduce our year-to-date shortfall to roughly \$2,500. In part, this is a good reflection of the more realistic budget finalized for 2015. Other contributing factors include Scrip, the Fred Meyer Community Reward program, facility rentals, and congregational giving. East Woods members will receive an envelope during July containing a year-to-date contribution statement, a finalized 2015 Budget, a year-to-date report on church finances, and an encouragement for all members to pay the annual per capita cost of \$28 per member.

✦ Session discussed staff transitions. Roberta Schlechter and Chase Van Epps will complete their formal staff involvement at the end of June, and each of them will be recognized and celebrated on Sunday, June 28. The Family Ministries Director job position has been posted online, and the Personnel Committee is already receiving and reviewing applicants. That job position will begin October 1, 2015.

✦ Session continued a discussion about partnership with a local non-profit agency called GoConnect. The founder of GoConnect, David Bilby, spoke at Session in May and introduced the various ministries coordinated by the agency. They include “Fresh Help” (a networked, community-based resource for financial benevolence), “The Refuge” (offering housing placement to homeless teens to allow them to graduate), “Compassion Vancouver” (providing free dental and health care clinics to uninsured community members, and “Faith-based Coffee” (connecting church leaders and school district leaders to establish partnerships).

✦ Session responded with favor to a request by LifeLine Screening to host a stroke and vascular disease screening at the East Woods campus in late September. LifeLine is a nation-wide, for-profit company partnered with nearly 100 hospitals and medical centers offering regional services for reasonable rates to those needing preventative and informative screenings. East Woods will host LifeLine on September 30.

LADIES OF EAST WOODS: Please note that Bunco Night, usually the second Monday of each month, is “on vacation” this summer. It will resume on **Monday, September 14.**

EAST WOODS WOMEN’S BREAKFAST

Third Saturdays—8:30 to 10:00 AM

Join us on **Saturday, July 18.**

We will not meet in August due to the Annual East Woods Rummage Sale & Vendors’ Faire on August 15th and 16th .

HERITAGE FARM/78TH STREET GARDEN Looking for a way to give back to your community that involves sunshine and plenty of friends?

With Churches In Partnership, we've been farming at **78th Street Heritage Farm** since 2009, growing miles of carrots and maintaining a vegetable garden with the help of countless volunteers, ranging in age from 93 to toddlers. Activities include planting, weeding and harvesting, depending on the season.

The acreage is maintained by the Clark County Food Bank, which exists to “*Alleviate hunger and its root causes*” in Clark County, WA. The Farming and Gleaning Program helps with that mission by increasing the amount of fresh, nutritious food they distribute through 29 partner agencies across the county, localizing emergency food supply and engaging and educating the community through volunteer opportunities. In 2014, the Heritage Farm produced over 36,000 pounds of vegetables for Clark County’s families in need.

Location: Heritage Farm/78th Street Garden - 1919 NE 78th St., Vancouver (across from Grovers).

Time: 9 AM to noon - every Saturday and Wednesday through the summer.

Bring: gloves, water, hat, jacket, knee cushion, sunscreen, and wear closed-toed shoes.

More information: contact **Janet and Chris Luck** at cajunluck@hotmail.com or 360-666-6526.



August Newsletter deadline—Tuesday, July 21

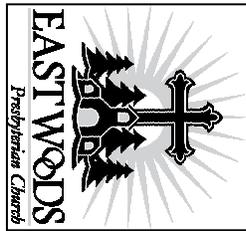
Office hours: Tuesday 1-4 PM, Wednesday & Thursday 9 AM - 3 PM

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