



Dear East Woods Family and Friends,

Rain is falling. The temperatures are dropping. Daylight is shortening. Winter is on its way. I hope this newsletter finds you dry, comfortable, and surrounded by the love of the Light of the World as we approach the wondrous celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Amidst what seem to be increasingly frequent reports of violence and terrorism around the world, I've been reflecting this week on the words of a fellow pastor in Arizona who wrote about the depth of God's love in the face of evil and human sin. He wrote:

"As I pondered the terrorist attacks this week, I kept trying to consider what it must be like to be God. Then, something got stuck in our garbage disposal in our sink. Have you ever turned the garbage disposal on at your house with a spoon stuck in it? Remember that awful grinding sound it makes as the blades are ravaging the spoon over and over and over and over? Being God seems a lot like being that spoon and the disposal never gets turned off. Ultimately, God is the victim of our attacks.

Think about that. How hurt are you right now? Who broke your heart? If you were God and could do anything you wanted right now, what would you do to your enemies?

One of the reasons we know that the Bible is not a collection of fables and fairy tales invented by men is the way the story is told. No one of their own imagination would tell the story in such a way that we all looked so bad and that God looked so good. Not only does God see all evil, He saw the greatest evil, which was the murder of his innocent Son. And He used that greatest evil for the greatest good - the forgiveness of sin and elimination of death in eternity."

The Gospel truly is an amazing story – the greatest story ever told, a story too wonderful to have been fabricated by human minds. It's the reason the heavenly host above the fields outside of Bethlehem praised God and declared God's glory in the highest heaven. Only God could have initiated such a story and offered such a sign of mercy. And, only God can bring to fulfillment the second piece the heavenly host declared – peace on earth among those whom He favors.

As this Christmas approaches, I hope you'll join me in praying for peace. I hope you'll join me in praying for the salvation and transformation of those whom we consider enemies. I hope you'll join me in praising God for His grace and favor, justice and righteousness in the face of humanity's evil and sin. This month – and every month beyond – may He be our Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Mighty God and Prince of Peace. And, may the peace of Christ be with you and yours as you remember and celebrate our Savior's birth.

In peace and love ~ *Bill*

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NOVEMBER 2015 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session reviewed and approved a list of eleven names of members who will receive the first of two letters requesting an update in membership status and possible removal from membership rolls. This process follows guidelines given in the Book of Order relating to members who have been inactive and absent from East Woods for an extended period of time.

Tom Koecher, Elder of Finance, presented the year-to-date financial report. As of the end of October, East Woods has spent roughly \$3,600 more than we have received. Tom also presented a draft of the 2016 budget, which was discussed and revised to be approved at the December Session meeting.

Gwen Wagner, Elder of Communications, presented a proposal from the Fundraising Committee offering six separate and engaging fundraisers spread throughout 2016. Session agreed on a commitment to donate 10% of funds raised by each fundraiser to a mission project determined by the Fundraising Committee and subsequently approved by Session.

Lynne Helmke, Elder of Hospitality, was approved to take on the leadership of the Congregational Care Commission in combination with her leadership over Hospitality. Pastor Bill and Lynne reported that plans are under way to develop a Deacon ministry that would work in conjunction with the Congregational Care Commission. A series of communication steps will be taken to inform the congregation as to the reasons behind the addition of the Deacon program. The Officer Nominating Committee will present prospective Deacons (number to be determined, most likely 6 or 7) for ordination along with the nominees for Session positions that need to be filled in June of 2016. At the next Session meeting, Lynne and Bill will present a more complete overview of the Deacon Ministry and what the transition would look like.

Chris Luck, Elder of Worship, presented a proposal from the Worship Commission for a new Sunday morning gathering schedule. Under the new schedule, the first service will take place from 8:30 – 9:30 AM, and the second service will take place from 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM. The purpose for the new service times is to allow for targeted ministries and meetings, including congregational meetings, a children's choir practice, small group or Sunday School gatherings, and Bible studies to take place between the services. Before the new schedule is solidified, the congregation will be given the chance to comment on individual buy-in, offer recommendations for how the in-between time can be used, and submit questions. If there's enough support for the new schedule, the new times would likely take effect after Labor Day 2016.

FAMILY MINISTRIES Children & Youth

Looking for new Family Traditions to help celebrate Advent?

Here are some ideas to get you started!

- Read one Advent Scripture passage each night in December – If you need a place to start, you can use the December Advent Bookmark I've included.
- Go to the library and find a new Advent/Christmas book to read! One of my favorites is "The Animals Christmas Carol" by Helen Ward.
- Act out the Christmas Nativity. Get the whole family involved – including pets! Let the adults do the reading, and pick parts for each person to play.
- Make cookies, and bring some to your Sunday School Teacher!
- Go caroling at the neighbor's house or local retirement home.
- Try a new Recipe – how about White Chocolate Popcorn instead of regular?!
- Make a Gingerbread castle using Graham Crackers.
- Gather branches from your yard and make an Advent Wreath.
- Have a craft night where everyone makes a new ornament for the tree.
- Put all of your family names in a jar, and have every member pull a name. Then pick a day when everyone secretly does a nice thing for the person they picked.

WINTER WONDERLAND

Meet at the Portland International Raceway for a night of fellowship and Christmas Lights! Don't forget to bring your warm clothes – this will be a walking event! Dogs are also invited!

**Portland International Raceway
December 2nd, 6:30PM**

LESSONS & CAROLS

Our young people are working to prepare the annual Christmas Service on December 13th at 10:30AM. It will be a beautiful rendition of the Christmas Story, told through poems and music. Don't forget to bring your singing voice!

December 13th 10:30AM

**Dress Rehearsal: December 6th 12-1pm*

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

I am thankful to all of the amazing volunteers we have here in youth and family ministries. You provide sanctuary for the brightest lights on earth – children. I cannot think of a more worthy cause. If you want to change the world, raise amazing adults! That's what we do here, with your help. *If you have it in your heart to work with children, and would like to become part of the terrific family ministries team at East Woods Presbyterian Church, contact our Family Ministries Director, Hailey Vandewiele, at Hailey@Eastwoodspres.org (503) 310-7607

Dec. 1 John 1: 1-5
Dec. 2 Isaiah 9: 2-7
Dec. 3 Isaiah 11: 1-10
Dec. 4 Jeremiah 33: 14-16
Dec. 5 Luke 1: 5-10
Dec. 6 Luke 1: 11-17
Dec. 7 Luke 1: 18-25
Dec. 8 Luke 1: 26-38
Dec. 9 Matthew 1:18-21
Dec. 10 Matthew 1: 22-26
Dec. 11 Luke 1: 39-45
Dec. 12 Luke 1: 46-56
Dec. 13 Luke 2: 1-5
Dec. 14 Luke 2: 6-7
Dec. 15 Luke 2: 8-12
Dec. 16 Luke 2: 13-14
Dec. 17 Luke 2: 15-18
Dec. 18 Luke 2: 19-20
Dec. 19 Micah 5: 2-5
Dec. 20 Matthew 2: 1-2
Dec. 21 Matthew 2: 3-6
Dec. 22 Matthew 2: 7-8
Dec. 23 Matthew 2: 9-12
Dec. 24 John 1:14



Advent Meditations

By Arla Olsen

*He lies in a manger...angels sing
Glory to the newborn King...
The bright Morning Royal Star,
surrounding the stable with its light,
brings forth a wondrous sight,
of the precious, loving Holy Child...
He is the Indescribable Gift from God,
His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.
Shepherds and Kings all Worship Him,
the babe born in Bethlehem...
Such a miracle on that Holy night,
He changed the world with His everlasting light...
His Grace and Mercy He gave to us,
With forgiveness of sins, as we trust...
Jesus the Messiah...King of Kings...Lord of Lords
Goodwill and Peace to all men on earth,
we celebrate in our hearts, His miraculous birth...
Forevermore adored, our Great and Mighty Lord...*

MISSION

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE



It's time once again to take a tag from the **EWPC Giving Tree** in Evergreen Hall (Narthex) and buy a gift for someone less fortunate. The process is the same as last year. The gifts go to Habitat for Humanity families and every member of each family receives two gifts. Working with Habitat families provides an opportunity for EW members/families to have a more personal connection by participating in the delivery of gifts.

Here is how it works:

1. Pick one or more tag(s) from the tree.
2. Put your name and phone number on the list, located on the table by the tree, opposite the number that matches your tag(s). i.e. 1A or 1B, 2A or 2B etc.
(Note there are 2 tags with the same name but each with a different gift)
Signing up in the right spot is very important!
3. Purchase the gift requested, wrap it and put the tag on the package.
It is also important that the same tag is back on the gift!
4. Put your wrapped gift under the tree by **Sunday, Dec. 13th**! (Preferably earlier.)

If you wish to participate in the delivery of gifts between **Dec. 19th and 24th**, there is a separate sign-up sheet on the table. You will sign up for a specific family. The number in the family, including children's ages and the address will be listed, but the family names and contact information will only be given to EW members who have signed up to deliver.

Questions? Contact **Katey Sandy**, 885-0824 or **Judy England**, 601-7567.

URGENT NEEDS: The new Vancouver city ordinance allows families who have been "car camping" to set up a tent in a public park. So the **Family and Community Resource Center at Mill Plain Elementary School** is ready to accept donations of tents, sleeping bags, flashlights, pen lights and batteries to help those now living in the park near Share House.

CARD MAKING IN DECEMBER

- Monday afternoon at 1 PM, December 21, Christmas Luncheon of Card-Makers at Panera Restaurant, 915 SE 164th Ave, Vancouver, WA 98683
- Monday afternoon, December 28th, at Brookdale at Fisher's Landing, 17171 SE 22nd Dr., at 1 p.m. in the Upstairs Library. We will help sign birthday cards for the residents with December birthdays. Greeting card kits will be available for residents to assemble for Soldiers' Angels.



Questions? Email at cardmaking@eastwoodspres.org

ADULT EDUCATION: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ANDY GRIFFITH

For four weeks we are going to explore four shows from the first season and see the lessons that apply to our lives. Class is from **Tuesday, November 17 to December 8**. We meet **6-8 PM** at the church for a shared meal and discussion around each show we'll watch together. Get your laughter hat on and be prepared to discuss the great lessons that come from Mayberry. Sign up in Evergreen Hall or give **Gwen Wagner** a call at 209-329-2751 or email her at gwendolynwagner@gmail.com. We recommend you bring your bible to this one. We will take turns bringing a portion of the meal each week. Sign up to contribute to one of the meals over the four weeks. See you there!



THE TOUCH OF CLASS CHORALE will present its winter concert,
Carols of the Winter Night,
at 2 PM on Sunday, December 20, at East Woods.

Scrip Gift Cards for the Holidays - Order Now!

Don't forget to order Scrip gift cards for all those good little girls and boys on your Christmas list. Perfect for mailing or as a stocking stuffer.

GIFT CARD HOLIDAY ORDER DATES	
<i>ORDER BY:</i>	<i>PICK UP ON:</i>
December 6	December 13



DID YOU SQUIRREL AWAY SOME NUTS FOR WINTER?

Did you know hazelnuts freeze very well for up to 18 months? Don't forget to squirrel some away for late night nibbling.

Just remember where you hid them in the freezer!

Please share your hazelnuts with friends and family. Better yet, give them an order form or send them to the East Woods website to purchase their own. **December 6 is the last day to order, with the last delivery on December 13.**

Thank you for your hazelnut purchases which directly support East Woods!

ANNUAL CHOIR CONCERT AT COLUMBIA PRESBYTERIAN This year will be a change from previous years: instead of afternoon and evening concerts, the choirs (children, adults, bells) will be part of the two morning worship services on **Sunday, December 6, at 9 & 10:30 AM.**

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT MILL PLAIN ELEMENTARY!

Mill Plain Elementary staff and students are so grateful for the support the East Woods congregation has so graciously and generously given. It's difficult to put into words just how much your partnership means to us. We have many opportunities for volunteers at our school:

- Lunch Buddy (1 hour per week)
- Indoor Recess Monitor-- board games, puzzles, art (1 hour per week and can rotate)
- Reading Buddy (flexible)
- Office/Family Resource Center (flexible)
- Classroom helpers (flexible)
- Donating snacks or supplies to individual classrooms (flexible)
- Other—if you just want to make a difference we will find a spot for you that works with your schedule and availability

If you would like to volunteer or get more information, please contact **Brenda Armstrong** at 604-6800 or **Rebecca Bentley** at 604-6807. We would love to have you join us in whatever capacity works for you! Thank you for making a difference!



East Woods Women's Breakfast

Third Saturdays
8:30 to 10:00 AM

Join us on Saturday, December 19

LADIES OF EAST WOODS Our annual Women's Retreat is just around the corner, **February 19-21** in Lincoln City, OR; beachfront home with a perfect ocean view. The price of the weekend will go down as the number attending goes up: 10 ladies = \$129.00 each, 14 ladies = \$97.00 each.

Watch for sign-up information beginning in January.
Questions? Ask **Peggy Konzek** or **Arla Olsen**.

January Newsletter deadline—Tuesday, December 15

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

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Please visit our website at www.eastwoodspres.org



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