

The Garden Gate

MY FATHER IS THE GARDENER...I AM THE GATE; WHOEVER ENTERS THROUGH ME WILL BE SAVED. JOHN 15:1; 10:9

SAVE THE DATE!

Faith Fillers

Have you ever wanted to ask some questions about the Bible, Spirituality, or Jesus and get answers? This is your chance! In a casual setting we will have an opportunity to do so! And of course there will be food! Look for your opportunity to submit the questions that will be addressed at this event. Let's "fill" in our gaps together!

March 2, 2010, 7pm

Location: TBD

Expectations

By Abbie-fo Wilcox

My sister was eagerly expecting the birth of her second child, but she wasn't expecting him to arrive so soon. On January 4, 1983-three weeks early-little Jan (Dutch for John) was born in Ridgecrest, California. Naturally my family back in Michigan was concerned about his welfare. He seemed so fragile. Approximately one month later we found out just how fragile he was.

As weeks passed my sister became concerned that Jan's jaundice was not resolving. This led to a doctor appointment followed by extensive testing. At Los Angeles Children's Hospital some 150 miles away, Jan was diagnosed with Alagille Syndrome-a rare disorder that primarily affects the liver. The doctors informed my sister of what to expect. Jan would most likely need a liver transplant at some point in his life. He would also experience developmental delays, xanthomas, multiple hospitalizations as well as other organs could be affected. But worst of all, his life expectancy was not very long. Most children with Alagille rarely lived past their eighth birthday. Armed with this information, my sister asked God to grant her a few things before Jan would be taken from her: that he would be toilet trained, that he would be able to attend school, and that he would learn to read. As Jan got older he began to hit these milestones and more. Fear raised in the heart of my sister, as she realized that her requests were being fulfilled. She began to wonder if these were signs of what was to come. She began to expect the worst.

It was 4:00 am January 18, 1990 when the phone rang downstairs.

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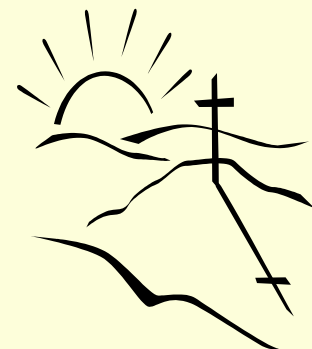
Dates to Remember

- February 9 - Leaders Meeting @ Autumn Ridge, "It's a SWOT team" meeting
- February 12 - No SBS
- March 2 - Faith Fillers

2009 - 10 Theme Verse

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Isaiah 40:28



Side by Side Rochester

www.sidebyside-rochester.org

Side by Side
Morning - Rochester

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2009 - 2010

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Celebrating the life of Suei-Ching Wang An

By Robin Morgenthaler

Suei-Ching Wang An, age 60, went to be with the Lord on Saturday, January 9, 2010 after struggling in an 8 month battle with pancreatic cancer. She was the wife of Dr. Kai-Nan An, an orthopedic researcher, and the mother of two grown daughters, Ting and Ming. She was also a grandmother to one grandson, Ryder. Suei-Ching was a leader in the International small group in Side By Side-Rochester. She had held that role for about five years.

She was born in 1949 in Canton, China. She grew up in Taiwan and graduated from National Taiwan University in 1970. That same year she moved to the United States to attend graduate school at Lehigh University. She obtained two Master's degrees in Psycholinguistics and Educational Statistics and Measurements. In 1973, she married her dear husband, Kai, and together they moved to Rochester in 1975. They had two beautiful daughters. As they raised the girls, Suei-Ching worked part time at Mayo Medical Libraries. Upon retirement from Mayo, she went to Hamline University in St. Paul and earned a certificate to teach English as a second language. In 2005, she joined Side By Side "to bring the Gospel to International families through love, hospitality and the teaching of English."

At her funeral, I learned some wonderful new things about Suei-Ching. Her brother Eddie told us that she was truly a dear little sister who fought hard and stood up for what was right even when it was difficult for her to do so. He recounted how she was a top scorer in a national exam, "one out of 10,000," he said and because of that was given privileges for further educational opportunities. He also said, "she was one for fashion," and cited the miniskirt as something she sported when it was popular.

Her son-in-law, Christian, spoke of the love and respect he had for his mother-in-law. He said he had known Suei-Ching for ten years and that she had always been kind, non-judgmental and engaging. His words spoke abundantly about the ideal relationship one should have with the parents of your spouse. I was touched by his words.

In tandem, her daughters spoke next. They conveyed great respect for their Mama and told us that she indeed taught them many things--the most important being prayer, gratefulness and meditation on the Bible. Her teaching methods, according to her daughters, were simply through setting an example in daily life. "She always prayed for us and encouraged us that we could pray in every circumstance no matter how big or small." She reinforced her lessons with what the girls called "motherly mottos" in Mandarin. One motto translated was, "You can pray on this matter," and the other was, "Thank the Lord." I looked at her girls. They were obviously God fearing, strong, intelligent, accomplished, beautiful, and brave women. Suei-Ching's parenting philosophy was not rocket science and it sure seemed to work.

Many other people were influenced by Suei-Ching and her life. I remember hearing her testimony a few years ago. Her older sister had led her to Christ. Upon moving to America, Suei-Ching understood her

(continued on page 4)

EXPECTATIONS CONTINUED

Now whenever the phone rang at an odd hour my family would hold their breath. That morning was no exception. Immediately the whole family was awake. I heard my mom crying downstairs. Calling down, I asked what was wrong. Then the words which I had hoped would never come did. "Jan died."

In a well of tears and shock I jumped out of bed and put clothes on any clothes I could find. My parents and I raced to the hospital. I have never experienced such a slow, quiet ride. Finally we reached the hospital where the details were filled in.

Jan hadn't been feeling well earlier in the week and my sister had taken him to the hospital as a precaution. There, his temperature soared out of the control, causing Jan to have a seizure. The seizure was too much for his heart, and so at 3:54 am Jan's life ended without pain.

I cannot even fathom what it would be like to be preceded in death by a child, but Mary, Jesus' mother did. I wonder how she reacted when she heard the news that her relative John had been killed. Did she worry that her son would be next? Did she think back to Simeon's words: "And a sword will pierce your own soul too." (Luke 2:35)? She expected that all she had been told would come to pass. Her son was to be the savior of her people, a savior who would be crucified. I wonder if she asked for some milestones from God. Did she realize what was happening when her son began to perform miracles? Did she marvel at the men and women Jesus had following him? Was it worrisome when he threw out the merchants from the temple? Did she truly know what was to be in his future-torture, pain, suffering?

One thing I do know: Mary expected that she would see her son again. Her expectation is one that we can share. If we believe Jesus is the one and only Messiah, we will meet Him in his father's house known as heaven. He is expecting us.

Lavished

By Tracy Bonilla

How often have you considered yourself lavished in anything, yet alone in the luxuries of love, grace and mercy? Ephesians 1:8 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he LAVISHED on us with all wisdom and understanding." 1 John 3:1 "How great is the LOVE the Father has LAVISHED on us, that we should be called Children of God! And that IS what we are!"

The word 'lavish' means 'giving or spending profusely; marked by or produced with extravagance: luxurious. We love tangible luxuries, don't we? We just received a flyer that a grocery store has a drawing for a 'luxurious trip for 2 to Sonoma County, California.' Just the photo alone leaves me longing for that warm sunshine and green landscape! A little bit of heaven in God's country? That sounds amazing, but short lived. What I really need is something that leaves me feeling lavished on a daily basis! *(continued on page 4)*

*Side by Side
Night - Rochester*

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2009 - 2010

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IN MEMORY CONTINUED

decision more fully and began to grow in love and knowledge of the Lord. Suei-Ching told the story of how she prayed for her husband to accept Christ. He eventually did accept Christ as his personal Savior and I am certain he was influenced by her behavior and her prayers.

Suei-Ching also led many other people to Christ. There were about 800 people who attended her funeral. There was a tribute to her with photographs and prerecorded sound bites that emphasized her love of God and people. Many spoke of how they were thankful for her gifts of hospitality and acceptance, while others brought up how much fun it was to knit, study the Bible, travel, sing, dance, or play tennis with her.

I learned later that Suei Ching's family chose the songs for the funeral from among those they regularly sang together, ones that provided great comfort and that she memorized during this hard time. One of the songs, I Know Who Holds Tomorrow, was led by a Chinese choir that sung in Mandarin. Since I had never heard a Chinese Choir, I was riveted watching and listening to them. Suei Ching had often spoken to Kai about how she was blessed by worship in Side By Side, and our own worship team led "Turn your Eyes Upon Jesus." It was so beautiful—I was moved and thought, "this is how music must be in heaven."

Now as I reflect on these two songs led by these two groups I fully understand that Suei-Ching really did "know about tomorrow," and that she truly desired for all of us to "turn our eyes upon Jesus and look full in his wonderful face." She was speaking to us one last time with powerful words that she wanted all of us to grasp.

I miss Suei-Ching. She was a bright smile in my day whenever I saw or talked to her. She always had the time to stop and listen to me when I approached her or called her on the phone. She made me feel important. She loved me. Amazingly, she was uplifting even while she was ill. She fully trusted the Lord for his plan for her life. I derive peace knowing that without a doubt, she is happy right now. She is with her Lord, Jesus Christ, in Heaven, and she is patiently waiting for the day when we can join her with Him.

Do you know the Lord like Suei-Ching did? Do you long for the peace and comfort that she had? The confidence to live on in the midst of painful struggle? If she was still here on earth she would tell you that

peace comes from knowing Christ and calling Him your Savior, from trusting Him, maybe even slowly at first, with all your concerns and problems and admitting to Him that you do not have the answers to life's questions.

If you desire what Suei-Ching had, you can begin by muttering simple words to Him. Ask Him to be your Savior, to excuse or forgive your past mistakes and to begin a new life with Him. That is all. Once you have done that, tell a leader in Side By Side or a Pastor or another Believer. Ask them to help you in your next step to Christ. Suei-Ching would be happy for you. Why? Because then you would have her peace, Jesus Christ.

LAVISHED CONTINUED

After all, how can I share the Good News about Jesus when I'm feeling drained and empty? This isn't godly or even close to the example Jesus set for me! And I don't know if anyone can relate or not, but I can imagine not even enjoying a beautiful sight or experience because of the unfulfilled longing for something more. Feeling lavished to the core of my soul...in the hidden places.

I actually decided while driving my children to school the other day (missed the bus!) that I need a faith mission statement. My very own personal mission statement that I can use as a "go to" when I feel like I'm hanging by a thread and it seems the rest of the world is sailing along and put together (anyone else had this illusion?). Something that would get me back on track in a moment's notice. That same day I came across several readings that spoke straight to my heart as they always do. One spoke of extravagant love and I decided this could possibly be my mission...LAVISHED! Remind myself every day that no matter what happens, I am basking luxuriously in Jesus' love and He loves me like no one on earth can. Besides, a one word faith mission might be easy to remember...

Picture the birthday of or last gift giving holiday of a dearly loved child you know. Think about how children LOVE to receive great gifts and receive them with no doubt, grateful enthusiasm! Oh to be like that...oh, that's right, we ARE called to receive the kingdom of God like children! Whoa! We are often skeptical of receiving such extravagance and we can't get out of our minds that

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Side By Side ...it is all about GOD

By Shirley Cropsey, Side By Side - Ann Arbor

The disappointment of not being able to return to Togo, West Africa, where my family had served since 1983 resolved itself into prayer...where would God have me serve stateside... doors began to open.

In 2006 an unexpected offer was presented from an area doctor who called and asked one day if he could send me the CD to introduce me to the Side By Side ministry. I listened to the presentation, sought out counsel from our pastor, and prayed. I'd not yet gotten involved with consistent ministry in our local church but pastor encouraged me to pursue this ministry using the Scriptures that speak of the older women teaching the younger women. He said, "Who would be better suited for this type of outreach?"

Yep, I was thinking God was going to use me in the lives of younger gals going through the same experiences that I'd gone through in years gone by. I could do this...God gently reminded me that it isn't about me...it is all about God.

We (four gals and I) had several planning meetings to discuss goals, share testimonies, and pray and plan. We ladies were all very focused on the ladies but in the end there was no one for the children and we had children! Here I must confess that the sin of pride poked its ugly head up. God began to peel away the layers of pride from my heart. "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11) I'll not bore you with the ugly details. Jonathan Edwards wrote, "A truly humble man is sensible of his natural distance from God: of his dependence on Him: of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom." Once God accomplished His work in my heart He gave me His vision for this ministry. He had already made it pretty clear that He was the Master and He knew best. It isn't always easy to be honest with God or with others but it would be so much better for us all if we recognized that we are all sinners saved by grace and this is a journey of growth in each of our lives. I'm so thankful for a loving, forgiving God who cares about me, His child. For Side By Side to move forward the need was obvious.

How many times in Scripture does God use the example of a child to teach us His truths? He

loaned us four precious sons to teach and to train, what a journey He took me on, through them He taught me so much about Himself. My Side By Side kids are continuing in their footsteps...growing me more like my Savior! My patient God has me right where He wants me ministering for the present. He is blessing me beyond measure as I work with my 'Side By Side kids'. They are a delight...eager to learn about our great and awesome God. It is an honor for me to serve our Lord in this way and He showers it with joy each meeting! I eagerly anticipate all that God will be pleased to accomplish in and through each one of these precious children that He has entrusted to me for this brief but very teachable time in their lives.

It isn't about me... it is all about GOD.

***God knew exactly how He planned to fill the void in my life. All our children are serving the Lord, three out of four are overseas taking eight of our eleven grandchildren with them...Germany, Kenya, and the Middle East. We are truly blessed... it is all about GOD.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. And He took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them." Mark 10:14b, 16 NIV

LAVISHED CONTINUED

one little (or big!) thing that keeps us from being deserving...we haven't done enough, been enough, prayed enough, you get the idea. The only thing you have to do for this kind of luxury is accept the gift! The woman who washed Jesus' feet with her hair, tears and perfume in Luke chapter 7, must've had, possibly for the first time in her life, the most lavished experience of love, mercy and grace. She believed Jesus accepted HER and cared about HER and she couldn't hold back! Since we can't wash Jesus' feet with our hair and tears, what CAN we do to lavish and love Jesus back for accepting us as we are?

(continued on page 6)

Life with Teenagers

By Kirsi Mohny

My 14 year old says he cannot hear in his math class.

"You should know how much people talk", he says, defending his slip of a due date.

But when I propose that I will ask the teacher to move his seat, his hearing gets immediately healed!

This makes me ponder the power of friends. Every event in my 14 year olds' life is measured against the charm of friends. If a day is dull, his eyes are sure to get shinier if a friend comes by. If our family goes out for dinner, the food would taste, oh so much better, if a friend could come along!

Some times I am ready to believe that my son can really be healed by the power of his friends. Yet, judged by the length of his phone conversations, the healing sessions are rather long. . .

And where does this leave us, the parents? When do we get to reap the willing company of our offspring? When do we get the long phone calls? Our older friends say that "things calm down" and "the class clown will once come home". Will this happen to us? As a parent of a 14 year old, it seems like a fairytale. . .

And yet: The old poem below shows that even as a new parent I had an inclination that the bond between us might not always be sweet and clear. Even then I had the same wish as now: that eventually, the rebel will jump the fence and come home again. In this hope I still dwell, making sure that the teen in my house still finds his lunch ready and full of love every morning--before the friends call. . .

Alex, when he was four (1999)

I hope that your touch
never changes.

In the early hours you come to me,
press your soft, sleepy hands against my cheeks
and whisper "My Mommy".

Slowly increasing wrinkles
do not bother you,
and no tales you know
of what *real* mothers
are like.

You take me the way I am
--to you I am what "mommy" means.

Would I not then wish,
that when you are eighteen,
and drive to my house on your motorcycle,
and lightly, in your black leather jacket,
jump over the fence,

. . . you would still come near me,
take my worn face into your hands,
and whisper . . .

"My mom. . ."

LAVISHED CONTINUED

Well, I personally think my family would reap benefits untold from a bit of overflow from this! What does a wife and mom look and act like who feels lavished in love, grace and mercy (every day!)? She probably wants everyone around her to experience this kind of freedom for themselves, freedom to be open and honest, joyful, loving, empathetic and understanding. She is overflowing with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I am not sure which would be most beneficial, but these spiritual fruits would definitely be welcomed in my household! I know we've all heard things like, 'If Momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy' and it may not be biblical, but this is...'Better to live on the corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.' Prov. 21:9. Don't waste another moment! Begin by accepting Jesus' love, lavished on you by the Father who knows what's behind the closed hidden places. Don't try to hide! Pray with a trusted friend. Believe Jesus' love is just waiting to get in and fill you to overflowing! Your heavenly Father lavished upon you His love in His wisdom and understanding. He knew that in order to capture your heart and mine, He had to love us first, and most lavishly at that! Love, live, lavish and don't forget the One who lavished you first!

Happy Birthday!!



February 3 Kara Durgin
 February 4 Amy Gillen
 February 6 Rebecca Griffith
 Erin Shimko
 February 7 Tina Daniels
 February 12 Trina Morris
 Feb. 18 Catherine Stryker
 Deb Zeldenrust
 February 20 Sunny Kim

February 23 Stephanie Hoyt
 Jenny Shapiro
 February 26 Karol Eckel
 March 1 Karen Seery
 March 5 Catherine Lario
 March 6 Lisa Friese
 Stephanie Schmitt
 March 7 Jodie Hook
 March 14 Kim Fleming
 March 15 Shelly Storm
 March 16 LeeAnn Tebben
 Jackie Tilburt
 March 23 Ronica Case
 March 24 Carli Kramer
 March 28 Janette Reeves
 March 30 Mayumi Hamaji
 Kate Bartelt

Garden Gate Information

The Garden Gate is published six times per year. The Garden Gate is passed out at the first morning meeting of the month and then mailed to those members who don't pick theirs up. The Garden Gate is e-mailed to all night members as well as those morning members or alumni who have chosen to receive the Garden Gate electronically. Past issues are also available on the website.

If you would like to change your delivery method please contact the Garden Gate editor, Cheri Milligan at cherim@kualumni.org. If you would like to contribute to the Garden Gate please e-mail Cheri by the 20th of the month prior to publication.

Baby News

Congratulations to...

● **Erin & Mark Shimko** and big sister Caitlin on the arrival of **Scarlett Alexandra** on December 14th at 9:59pm! She weighed 7 lbs 5.6 oz and was almost 21 inches.

● **Mike & Cori Baker** on the arrival of **Madeline May** on January 20th at 7:29am! She weighed 7lbs 2.3oz and was 19.75 inches long.

● **Kristen and Paul Luikart** on the arrival of their daughter, **Natalie Rose** on January 11, 2010. She weighed 6 lb 14 oz and was 19.5 inches long.

Contributors

SHEILA CROPSY

Shirley Cropsey is the wife of a retired surgeon. She and her husband Bob have four boys and eleven grandchildren. They served as missionaries in West Africa. Today, she continues to serve others as she hosts the Ann Arbor Side By Side Chapter in her home and coordinates the childcare.

TRACY BONILLA

Tracy is originally from Waupun, WI and is married to Luis, a second year fellow in cardio-thoracic surgery. She lavishly indulges (not sure what their opinion would be on that description...) Luis, Ana (11), Philip (8), and Anthony (5), along with William (cat), Lemon (cockatiel), and Snowball (bunny), (oh yeah, Mr. Crabs too...hermit crab, not the hubby!). She loves tea time, Zumba and Colombian food, speaks a little spanish and is learning to set limits...like not getting a dog just yet.

KIRSI MOHNEY

Born and bred in Finland, Kirsi has lived in the USA for 26 years. She is married to Brian, a pediatric ophthalmologist,

and they have four children, Briitta, 19; Greta, 18; Alex 14 and Marshall 10. Due to the high percentage of teens the phonebill in this family has seen an notable increase in the last few years. Kirsi loves to take her family to her homecountry. And yes, she talk to her friends on the phone as well!

ROBIN MORGENTHALER

As if once was not enough, Robin Morgenthaler moved to Rochester twice. She lives with her husband Tim, a physician in Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine, their five children and one extremely expensive designer dog who likes to be held while Robin types.

ABBIE-JO WILCOX

Abbie-Jo is originally from Holland, Mi. She moved to Rochester, Mn with her husband Ryan in 1996 "just" for medical school. Twelve years later, they are still at Mayo, where Ryan is half way done with his fellowship in Hematology/Oncology. They have two daughters: Adelyn age 6 and Nellie age 3.



What is Side By Side Rochester?

Side By Side Rochester is a group of women who desire to grow in their walk with the Lord while supporting one another as medical spouses. Being married to a doctor brings with it a unique set of circumstances. We are here to pray for, love and encourage one another through whatever those circumstances might be, while spurring one another on in our personal relationships with Jesus Christ.

Our goals are as follows:

- To build Christian friendships through fellowship.
- To be a place of prayer and support.
- To challenge women to study and apply the Bible to their lives daily.
- To learn more about God and the Bible while growing in our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- To provide a safe atmosphere for children where Biblical principals are modeled and taught.

While striving to meet those goals, we are committed to nurturing and upholding these truths:

We believe in one God who exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead. Through his sacrifice, we can have eternal life and a personal relationship with God. The purpose of Bible Study is to help each of us grow in that relationship through study and fellowship.

The women of Side By Side come from all over the United States and from countries all over the world. We have different backgrounds and were raised in different denominations, many having never attended a bible study before!

We extend you an invitation to join us!

THEREFORE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP...I THESSALONIANS 5:11

The Garden Gate
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Meeting at Autumn Ridge Church
for the 2009-10 year
and in members' homes

