**April 2012**

**Reflections from a Mother’s Heart**

Always the practical joker. One of the things that used to define Seth was that he loved to laugh and to play jokes, especially on his sisters! How many times did I admonish, “Who likes a joke? Only the person that plays it!” One of his oft-repeated favorites was played as the kids were growing up. Craig and I used to take a walk every evening while our young crew cleaned up the kitchen after dinner. Since we didn’t have a dishwasher, the kids took turns washing, drying, sweeping, and so forth. Seth would occasionally slip an almost undetectable rubber band around the sink sprayer, so that when one of his sisters turned on the water, they’d get soaked. But sometimes, to everyone’s delight, one of his jokes would backfire! Such was the time when we were at church late one evening and Seth *thought* he saw his older sister in the long, dark, deserted hallway of the educational building. He quietly sneaked in the door and decided that he would jump out at her as she came around a corner. Quivering with anticipation, everything seemed to be going as planned until the hapless person responded with a scream and, to his horror, it wasn’t his sister after all but one of the church leader’s wives!! Fortunately, she took it in stride and even returned the favor at a later time.

Yes, he liked to smile. We got a note this past week from one of his California friends, who shared, “I worked with Seth nine years ago in Riverside. He was so full of life, smiles and great stories.” A birthday note from a friend he grew up with that expresses a similar sentiment stated, “I remember your smile. I always see you smiling, with a smile that reached your eyes and a grin with a hint of mischievousness!”

Part of his brain that was injured in the accident eight and a half years ago was the area that houses personality, and for the first five years his face was totally expressionless until he was finally able to manage a lopsided smile (see the archives, “A Father’s Perspective, 2008.” His smile was lopsided because of the injury to the right side of his head, so the left side of his body is more restricted). Then, a year after that, he started to occasionally screw his whole face into an awful grimace. I call that “his face that can break a mother’s heart” because it makes him look like he’s in terrible pain. But sometime during this last year or so he has managed to combine the two expressions to get what I think is an intended reaction from us. It usually happens when I wash his face in the morning. He puts on that pathetic, grimacing face like he’s experiencing a fate worse than death! Then Craig will often come into the room and say something like, “Oh, gut it up, Seth. What a wimp! Man up!” and the grimace instantly turns into a smile as his face lights up! Of course, we laugh and tell him how funny he is. Even with his extremely limited abilities he has been able to intentionally plan and play a little joke. It brightens our day to see that he has developed a small way to express his personality!

Seth has to take numerous daily medications to offset serious complications related to his brain injury. As important as all those are, I can’t help thinking that Proverbs 17:22 offers a good supplement: *A merry heart is good medicine.*

~Mary

**May 14, 2014**

**A Father’s Perspective**

*“Trust in His unfailing love.”*

Like many husbands, I gave Mary a Mother’s Day card on Sunday, thanking her for the many sacrifices she has made for our family, some sacrifices—such as her ongoing care for Seth—that go beyond those which other mothers are typically called to do. She is the one who bears the brunt of the daily care for Seth, week by week and year by year, and has had to endure a daily emotional hurt that surpasses the physical pain of the arthritis she has been subject to for the past 28 years, yet she continues to be an encouragement and a bright spirit to those she meets. We have been excited about a new ministry the Lord has dropped into our laps, with my being asked to join a nearby congregation—Valley View Christian Church in Kent, WA—as the lead preaching/teaching pastor, a half-time position ideally suited to my desires and gifts and limitations of time because of our care for Seth, and an opportunity for Mary to do what she finds most fulfilling in mentoring other, younger women.

Mary had been struggling with dizziness issues and some confusion for a few weeks, so on Mother’s Day Sunday afternoon she and I and our son-in-law, Matthew, drove her down to Valley Medical Center in Renton for a brain scan, just to rule out certain possibilities. To our shock, the scan and a subsequent MRI has revealed a malignant tumor on the right side of her brain. Today, the surgeon (after conferring with a couple of others) informed us that it could be one of two kinds of tumors: one that would probably have to be addressed surgically or another variety that often responds well to radiation (a better scenario). She will undergo a biopsy Tuesday and we should have the results on Wednesday as to what kind of brain tumor it is and the suggested medical procedure to deal with it.

Obviously, this is a devastating blow that we weren’t anticipating (the natural tendency is to ask, “When is enough, enough?!”), with weird timing in light of our new ministry venture. As believers, our first line of response, of course, is prayer, that God would restore her, either by the preferred method of direct healing or by other medical means if necessary. Certainly this hasn’t taken our sovereign Lord by surprise and we most desire that He be glorified in whatever manner He chooses. Even so, our family—and Seth and I particularly—need Mary. The reason I’m posting this update so soon since the one Mary recently wrote is that I know many of you who read this will pray for Mary—even many whom we don’t even know that click on to Seth’s web site from time to time. So, thanks for your prayers. We’ll keep you updated.

~Craig

**May 17, 2012**

**A Father and Husband’s perspective**

I’m feeling both crushed and empty, and within a week’s time everything has gone from routine to surreal. The results of Tuesday’s biopsy on Mary’s brain tumor revealed that it is a stage 4 glioblastoma, the worst of the scenarios we were originally given. If untreated, the lemon-sized tumor on the right side of her brain will surely take her life, perhaps within a few months (she’s already lost some sensation and movement on her left side). Even if the tumor *could* be removed surgically, the surgeon said that there would be an almost certainty of “extensive neurological damage” that would leave her in a poor quality of life, and even so, such tumors recur in over 95 per cent of cases within a year. His recommendation is to perform a “de-bulking” and remove as much of the tumor as possible without damaging surrounding brain tissue and treat what is left with chemo and radiation, which would prolong her life without the more severe neurological consequences. Tomorrow my son-in-law, Matthew, will take the results of the MRI and pathology report up to Seattle for a second opinion, although this surgeon said it is fairly clear-cut. Otherwise, the surgeon will do one more MRI on Sunday and surgery will be performed first thing Monday morning.

Last evening (Wednesday) we had some of the elders of both our former church, Trinity Baptist in Renton, and our new fellowship, Valley View Christian in Kent, gather in Mary’s room and do what James 5 proscribes—anoint her with oil and pray over her. We are grateful for these godly men and for all who are lifting us up in prayer to our heavenly Father. Still, the confusion we feel in all this is intensified by our recently being called to a new ministry and Mary, for the first time in years, has really been anticipating a great ministry and looking forward to more speaking opportunities. We’ve always been a team, we’ve always been a support for the other.

Aside from a miraculous intervention of our Lord, the future looks incredibly bleak. Where will Mary have to go for an extended post-surgical rehabilitation? Will she ever be able to come home again? If so, could I manage both her and Seth and carry on otherwise? The flowers and vegetable garden I’ve been planting—bolstered by a new greenhouse I had constructed earlier this spring—have suddenly lost their luster (so much of it was for her enjoyment). I dread the coming nights when I always get up at 2:00 am to turn Seth in bed; those are the times when my mind often weighs most heavily on circumstances and sleep escapes me, despite my knowing all the appropriate scriptures.

As always, the question is, “How much does Seth understand?” As I’m writing this, I haven’t as yet told him the most recent bad news about his mom. Last Sunday, when I called home to let the girls know about the tumor, Holly asked him if he would be praying for his mom and he immediately raised his eyebrows. Later, as Matthew and I were in the kitchen reviewing the day, I walked into his room—not wanting him to be out of the loop—and asked if he wanted to hear Matthew’s professional assessment and, again, he raised his eyebrows. His will be a most difficult situation in that he would surely want to be there for his mother and cannot.

Please continue to pray for all of us, especially for Mary. I know that our God is a god of hope (Rom. 15:13), but our hope has taken a severe hit. Mary is doing her best to accept whatever the will of God reveals. For now, at least, she prefers having no visitors. *“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort (our) hearts and establish them in every good work and word”* (2 Thess. 2:16-17).

~Craig

**May 22, 2012**

**A Father and Husband’s Perspective**

Mary’s surgery was yesterday afternoon at Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, performed by a surgeon that our son-in-law, Matthew, has been acquainted with for 20 years and has a very high regard for. The doctor was able to remove about 70 per cent of the tumor; she had hoped to remove more of it but the signals to the brain from Mary’s left side, which has been rendered weak and mostly immobile for the past week, were not registering well and the doctor was reluctant to go any further and risk neurological damage. Mary will remain in the ICU for several days and then probably be moved to a rehab facility in hopes of regaining the left arm and leg functions again. The plan is also that she will begin a series of radiation and chemotherapy treatments to shrink what is left of the tumor so far as possible.

We are grateful for medical science, but also realize that, ultimately, her life and time is in the hands of our Lord and Great Physician, that *“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be”* (Psalm 139:16). Our first grandchild is expected around the first of August. We continue to covet your prayers.

Things will most likely get a bit complicated around here with caring for both Seth and Mary’s needs. Fortunately, we have many Christian friends—from three churches with whom we’ve had fellowship—who have offered their assistance. Her two sisters, Jan Miller and Donna McMath, have taken turns staying with and caring for Seth for a number of days to allow me to be with Mary most of the day. I’ve been asked, “How are *you* doing?” Remarkably well, so far. Sleep has been easier than I expected it to be. Thanks for lifting our family up in your prayers.

~Craig

**May 24, 2012**

**Update on Mary**

Mary’s surgeon was pleased to show me an MRI taken a day after surgery that showed 90-95 percent of the tumor having been extracted rather than the original estimation of 75 percent. Mary was still on strong pain medication yesterday, and the subsequent drowsiness makes therapy and even eating a struggle, although she has been able to sit on the edge of her bed and has taken small amounts of soft foods (chocolate milkshake seems to be a favorite).

It is still too early to know how long she will be in the hospital or where she will be moved afterward and how radiation/chemo treatments will factor in. Understandably, Seth’s care here at home complicates the situation. Mary’s two sisters, Jan and Donna, have been a huge help, and we have many friends willing to help in so many ways as well. At times like these, it is so great to be part of God’s supportive family. Again, thanks for your prayers.

~Craig

**May 29, 2012**

**Update on Mary**

Mary was moved to a skilled nursing facility in Issaquah, about 20 miles east of Seattle, last Friday. She is doing well (still on some lighter pain meds), and we are encouraged that she has regained most of the functions on her left side. In fact, today she began physical therapy, and although we were hoping that she would just be able to stand up and perhaps take a few steps, she managed not only to walk the length of the parallel bars back and forth but also walked most of the way back to her room using a walker. Tomorrow I will take her to an appointment with a radiation oncologist for a preliminary consultation at a new Swedish Medical facility about ten minutes away. The actual treatments will begin in a couple of weeks.

Mary’s current place of residence is only 20 minutes from our home. I have no idea how long she will need to be there, but in any event, at some point I can always pick her up and bring her home for a couple of hours’ visit. Seth hasn’t seen his mom for the past couple of weeks, so this afternoon I’m planning to take him up to see Mary for a spell.

We are so very blessed by the prayer support, cards, and emails. If any of our long distance friends would like to visit with Mary over the phone, give me a call at (425) 432-1587 and I’ll tell you how you can contact her.

~Craig

**June 2, 2012**

**Reflections from Room 304**

It still sounds strange to my ears to say that on Mother’s Day, just three weeks ago, the doctors discovered that I had a malignant brain tumor the size of a lemon. It sounds even stranger to say that I’ve had brain surgery and am now residing temporarily at a nursing and rehabilitation center, where I’m having to learn to walk again (what hard work, believe me!).

On the morning of the surgery, Craig and I read Psalm 103 together. Part of it says, “Praise the Lord, O My soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits . . .” You might be reading this right now and can’t help asking yourself, “But what are the benefits?–*she had brain surgery!*”

I was meditating on Psalm 92:12 last night where God compares the righteous to a palm tree, and I think it’s one of the most fascinating analogies in the Word of God. The palm tree is the one tree that you’ll never see uprooted or blown over in a hurricane-level storm. It’s because the growth rings, instead of going outward each year, go upward, more like stacking checkers connected with elastic. Psalm 92:12 says that “the righteous will flourish like a palm tree.” You’re probably wondering what is so great about that. But because of the way the palm tree grows, if a hurricane hits, the tree will bend clear to the ground and yet spring back in place after the storm. I feel like we were hit with a hurricane on May 13th, Mother’s Day, but–like the palm tree–we’re still standing because of the grace of God. We’re not destroyed–what a benefit of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ!

The palm tree, also, has such deep roots it can flourish in the Sahara Desert. It can always find life-giving water. During this overwhelmingly difficult “desert” in our lives I can honestly say that everyday God’s Word, which I’ve carefully tucked away in my soul for decades, feeds me fresh with life-giving nourishment. That is why I love the analogy of being like a palm tree! The benefits are unbelievable–“PRAISE the Lord, O my soul, and bless his holy name. And forget not all his benefits!”

Kirsten did a beautiful watercolor of a palm tree against a colorful sky. She hung it in my room where I can be encouraged all day as I look at it. Psalm 92 ends by saying, “The righteous will still bear fruit in old age and declare that the Lord is upright and there is no unrighteousness in him.” I’ve read that, in some palm trees, the more the tree has been scarred, the sweeter the fruit. I still feel that my most productive years for impacting God’s Kingdom are ahead of me. It is certainly not like I had planned, but I truly believe it will be deeper and more profound than I could have ever imagined as I submit myself to His plans and purposes for my life.

*Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name . . . and forget not all his benefits!*

~Mary

**June 6, 2012**

**Update on Mary**

We received some encouraging words from a couple of Mary’s doctors this week. On Tuesday we had a follow-up visit with the surgeon, who was very surprised and pleased that Mary has regained the movements of her left arm and leg since the surgery (apparently, the surgeon was concerned that the paralysis she had noted prior to the surgery might be a permanent result of damage by the tumor). As her strength and sense of balance returns, Mary should soon progress from the use of a walker to a cane and, hopefully, to natural walking again. One item of concern is the loss of her peripheral vision on the left side, a condition the physician said might not return as before.

Today another physician who oversees the care at Mary’s skilled nursing facility said that he was “thrilled” with her condition. Evidently he must have spoken with the surgical team in Seattle to catch up on Mary’s situation when she was moved to the care center, and the collective prognosis among the doctors was not at all rosy, due to the size, type and location of the tumor, and the fact that he himself had noted Mary was not entirely lucid when he first interviewed her. Now, however, he is amazed at how articulate she is and how well she is progressing with the physical and occupational therapy. In fact, he said she was in the “top 20 percent of the best possible outcomes” from that kind of surgery. Thanks so much for your prayers!

Mary will begin radiation sometime next week aimed at the portion of tumor(s) that still remain, a taxing schedule of treatments that will be given five days a week for six weeks. I am grateful for the many friends who have volunteered to be with Seth while I make the daily trips with Mary, not to mention the outpouring of cards and emails (and food!).

The doctors have reiterated that there is no probable “cure” for this kind of cancer, but we are hopeful that our great God will be pleased to transcend the limitations of medical science, that we will yet “rejoice in knowing that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus this will turn out for (her) deliverance” (Phil. 1:19)

~Craig

**June 16, 2012**

**Reflections from Mary**

Do you remember as a child lying in bed on Christmas morning literally shaking with anticipation and excitement over what that magical day would hold? That’s how I felt yesterday morning, knowing that after over a month of being in the hospital and a rehabilitation center, I was finally coming home to start the next part of our journey. It was surreal to sit in my chair in the living room and see my glasses right where I had left them on Mother’s Day four weeks ago. It seems we have lived a whole lifetime since then. We still have a long road ahead of us with chemotherapy and radiation, but it’s so wonderful to be functioning (even in a more limited way) at home.

We have been totally overwhelmed by the kindness and sacrificial help of so many precious friends, especially in helping with Seth’s care and needs.

I was reading in Psalm 57 today where I am reminded that God will fulfill his purpose for me. This brings confidence that the plan He designed for my life since the beginning of time will be accomplished. Personally, I’m hoping it includes many more years of teaching the Word of God and of mentoring others.

*On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many* (2 Cor. 1:11).

~Mary

**June 29, 2012**

**Update from Mary**

*“Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.”* (Psalm 57:1)

Sixty-two years ago today my parents named me “Mary” as I quietly entered their lives. In looking back, I am encouraged and challenged by the meaning of my name, which (oddly enough) means “bitter”—not an especially nice meaning for a name! Someone once said that the trials we go through either make us *bitter* or *better.* I like to think of the myrrh plant, which is very bitter until it is cut or crushed, and then it gives off a wonderful fragrance (thus, the wise men bringing the Christ child gold, frankincense, and myrrh).

In this difficult season of our lives where I am only five weeks out of having two malignant brain tumors removed, it still sounds so strange to say that I have brain cancer, and I am asking God to let my life be a fragrant offering to bring Him glory. There is no room for bitterness when you know that God is sovereignly directing every detail of your life and He invites you to rest under the “shadow of His wings until the disaster has passed.”

I have completed 13 radiation treatments so far, along with chemotherapy, but I’ve been tolerating them well. We keep walking forward, sustained by the prayers of the saints. Seth has done very well under the watch care of many kind friends while Craig and I make our daily trips to the hospital; he’s been having many smiley days, which really brings me joy.

~Mary

**July 28, 2012**

**Update on the Esvelts**

The period of five-day a week radiation treatments and daily chemotherapy dosage for Mary has been completed; she will now get a month’s rest before beginning a new regimen of chemotherapy. These treatments were designed to attack the cancerous cells of the remaining portion of the brain tumor and render them unable to divide, in hope that the remnant of the tumor will continue to shrink and die off over the next couple of months. As mentioned earlier, there is no guarantee of this; as her oncologist remarked, “This is one of the worst kinds of tumors in one of the worst possible places.” And so we continue to hope and pray that our desire for healing and God’s ultimate glory would coincide.

In the meantime, Mary continues to deal with the effects of the tumor, the surgery, and the subsequent treatments—a reality of the “crushing” she alluded to in one of her former updates. Although her speech is relatively unaffected, her ability to translate her mental/thought intentions into physical/mechanical processes has been compromised. She has all but given up trying to type messages on the keyboard (her last couple of updates were transcribed by me from her written notes). Formerly simple procedures such as normal household chores, making a sandwich, getting dressed, etc., have become daunting tasks. Everything she attempts to do is harder and takes much more time than before. A continual frustration is dizziness, the result of a damaged muscle from one of her eyes making that eye a split second slower than the other. That, coupled with a loss of peripheral vision on her left side, makes it impossible to take in things at a glance, so she misses a lot. She can (carefully) walk around the house because there are things to hold onto, but she cannot walk unassisted outside the home. Her short-term memory has also been affected to an extent. At this point it is unknown as to whether these, and other symptoms, are the result of the original tumor just putting pressure on her brain—in which case they may gradually return—or whether they are the result of the tumor actually invading parts of the brain, in which case the damage may be permanent. You cannot imagine the difficulty of being so restricted and just wanting to be “her old self” again, particularly at a time when we were hoping to be involved in our new church and ministry.

One ray of light in this otherwise “dark night of the soul” has been the July 13th arrival of our new grandson, Andrew Craig Rollosson, who has become a joy to his parents, Matthew and our daughter Holly, and to us. When I held him up in front of Seth for their first introduction, Seth began making shapes with his mouth as if he wanted to talk to his little nephew.

*“Relent, O Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us.”* – Psalm 90:13-17

~Craig

**September 14, 2012**

**Update on Mary (with reflections)**

*“My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”* (Matt. 26:39)

A number of months after Seth’s accident and when it had become clear—barring a miraculous intervention—that he would never regain most of his functions, I was speaking with a person who had known both of us well, who remarked, “How can I believe in a God who has let this happen to Seth?” I’m sure that that was not an isolated opinion. My response was something to the effect of, “I don’t understand why God allowed this tragedy to happen, and I certainly don’t like it, but at least the fact that I believe there is a sovereign, loving God who has a divine plan and purpose for it all gives me hope and comfort, because if there was no loving God Who ultimately was in control of all things I would be left with nothing but a feeling of senselessness and despair.” And so we trusted God in spite of the confusion and pain and were given grace to move on.

Today, nine years later, we ironically find ourselves in a similar circumstance in that we are enduring a trial that we certainly would not have wanted, but nonetheless believing that God is in control and has His own purposes for all that transpires. The irony extends even further, to the very reasons for our trial (though from different causes)—damage to the right side of the brain in both Seth and Mary. Sadly, an MRI revealed this week that the radiation and chemo treatments have failed to kill off what was left of Mary’s aggressive brain tumor, and the tumor is actually growing back. More surgery is probably not an option because it could cause severe neurological damage. The only medical recourse left is to begin bi-monthly infusions of a drug called Avastin, which inhibits the formation of blood vessels, including those that would feed the tumor. If the drug works as hoped, it could extend her life for a year or perhaps a little more; if not, she may only have a few months left. The infusions will begin next week, and in six weeks another MRI will reveal whether the drug is doing any good. In the meantime, her dizziness has gotten worse, caused likely from the effects of the tumor as well as a cataract on her right eye that has accelerated its growth due to all the recent medical activity. She will most likely have surgery to remove the cataract in a couple of weeks and that, plus any good the infusions may accomplish, might at least reduce her dizziness and help restore much of her vision. Her frustration in not being able to do even simple, day to day functions and having to depend on others for so much of the time is a reminder of what Seth has most likely had to endure to an even greater degree these past nine years.

We had always encouraged and comforted each other with the notion that, although Seth’s care and condition was an ongoing weight to be borne and continual source of sadness, we at least had each other to share the burden. Now, for the future, we can only trust in God’s faithfulness; He was there to dispense necessary grace when it was needed nine years ago and will surely do the same in the days ahead. We are so very grateful for all of you who have been lifting us up in prayer; we realize that God is still able to turn things around if it suits His glory and so we continue to covet your intercessions. How I would love to see our Lord step in and (this time!) confound medical science! Yet we bow to His will.

*“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”* (Isa. 43:2-3)

~Craig

**October 31, 2012**

**A Husband’s Reflections**

*“We do not want you to be uniformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.”*

She was my love, my strong companion, my encouragement, and the most precious thing to me this side of heaven, and God blessed us with 40 wonderful years together. But my dear wife left us this morning to meet with her Lord Whom she has loved and served so faithfully these many years. This loss for me and the girls, so unexpected this soon, hasn’t really sunk in at this point, and I don’t know how much Seth is able to process her leaving.

Mary awoke as usual this morning, and after helping her get dressed and stand up, she said she suddenly felt sick. Nothing hurt, but she just felt really bad and it continued to worsen until she said I should call 911. The medic unit and paramedics had difficulty finding her blood pressure and she became increasing agitated until they finally took her by stretcher out to the aid car parked outside on the street. By that time she had become unconscious. Prior to leaving for the hospital, the paramedic said her heart was “going in and out on her” and he suspected a pulmonary blood clot. The seriousness of the situation took on an even greater gravity as I passed the back of the aid car at the hospital and saw the medic pushing rhythmically on her chest. After checking in, I was taken to the emergency operating room while I held her hand and a team of hospital staff continued to work on her until it became apparent that her heart would not come back on its own. The physician said it had all the signs of a pulmonary embolism and there was nothing that could have been done under the circumstances.

The last MRI on her brain, a couple of weeks ago, had showed a slight decrease in the tumor, most likely due to the new medication, and although this provided some encouragement we realized it just bought her a little more time, unless God intervened. My daughters and I had prayed some time ago that, should the Lord’s intention be to take her home to be with Him rather than heal her outright, she would not have to waste away physically and mentally with the brain tumor but that He could somehow take her more quickly. She would have wanted that as well, and apparently the Lord has granted our wish.

We are tentatively planning a memorial service for Mary Esvelt on November 17th (Saturday) at 4:00 pm at Kent Covenant Church in Kent, Washington.

Mary’s stated purpose in life was “to make the invisible God visible.” She did not fear death, she was confident of where she was going based on her faith in Him who died and rose for her. We were even reading a book by Randy Alcorn, Heaven, as a sort of preparation for what would likely come. Yet one of Mary’s sorrows was that she would not be there for our grandchildren (she would have made a fantastic grandma!). I want our grandchildren, as much as possible, to know what kind of wonderful, godly woman their grandmother was. So, any of you who knew Mary and were somehow impacted by her life, please share your impressions or memories with me (concisely) by email. My daughters and I will read through them and will have some of them read at Mary’s memorial service (for sake of time we probably won’t be able to read them all) and, in any event, they will all be compiled for our grandson, Andrew (and any other grandchildren that come along later), so that they may know their grandmother a little better, as seen through the eyes of those her life touched. You can send your emails to: cesvelt@juno.com or mesvelt@juno.com

In the meantime, I would appreciate you keeping me, Holly, Seth, and Kirsten in your prayers. Much thanks for your support.

~Craig

**November 14, 2012**

**A Husband’s Reflections**

It was two weeks ago this morning that my beloved Mary went to be with her Lord after struggling for five and a half months with the effects of a malignant brain tumor. The flurry of activity of preparations that need to be made, friends dropping by, and the day to day care of Seth and other routines have kept my mind and body occupied. Still, with time to reflect on our immense loss, my daughters and I are amazed at the sustaining grace of God, and we can truly say that we are rejoicing in the midst of our sorrow that Mary, who was the very heart of our family, is now relieved of all suffering and is herself rejoicing in a far better place. For us, days of loneliness will surely come.

We have been incredibly blessed by the cards and emails from friends who have shared how Mary impacted their lives. They will be saved for our grandchildren, to provide them with a fuller portrait of their grandmother whom they never had the opportunity to become acquainted with.

A memorial service for Mary will be held this Saturday, November 17th, at the Kent Covenant Church in Kent, Washington, 12010 SE 240th St., at 4:00 PM. Of course, we are planning to have Seth in attendance along with the rest of the family. For any of you who would have liked to attend but are unable to, we are planning to have a live streaming of the service on the internet, which can also be accessed later.

Mary always enjoyed hearing our son-in-law, Matthew Rollosson, relate stories of his time working with the underprivileged in Ethiopia. Shortly before her death, Mary indicated her hope that our grandson, Andrew, and his father could someday return to Ethiopia for a short-term mission so that Andrew could catch a vision for helping others who are more disadvantaged than us, and she initiated setting aside the resources for such a trip.

Mary's second wish was to largely forego gifts this holiday season, and she instead asked family members to begin collecting loose change in water bottles which would be combined at Christmas and donated to a relief agency for the purpose of digging a well in Africa, perhaps even in Ethiopia. After Mary’s passing, some friends suggested expanding Mary’s wishes beyond her own dream by setting up a foundation from which funds may then be drawn for such specific purposes. To that end, tax-deductible donations can be sent—and made out to—Valley View Christian Church, 25605 124th Ave. SE, Kent, WA 98030, designated as **“Mary Esvelt Well Fund.”**

What a tribute it would be to Mary that her grandchild(ren) could one day visit a well in Africa that was funded by those who knew and loved her!

~Craig